



Han Lamers and
Bettina Reitz-Joosse

THE CODEX FORI MUSSOLINI

A Latin Text of Italian Fascism

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The *Codex Fori Mussolini*

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The *Codex Fori Mussolini*

A Latin Text of Italian Fascism

Edited with Introduction, Commentary and Translation

Han Lamers and Bettina Reitz-Joosse

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List of Abbreviations and Notations

* Indicates reference to a specific lemma in the commentary section (pp. 99–122)

- Ann. Inst.* 1–14 *Annales institutorum quae provehendis humanioribus disciplinis artibusque colendis a variis in urbe erecta sunt nationibus*, edited by the Collegium annalium institutorum de urbe Roma. Rome: Biblioteca d'arte editrice, 1928–42.
- B* *Bollettino dell'Opera Nazionale Balilla* 7, no. 2 (15 November, 1932): 3–5.
- C* *Codex Fori Mussolini* (Florence: Apud Felicem le Monnier, 1933).
- F* *Il Foro Mussolini*, edited by Opera Nazionale Balilla (Milan: Bompiani, 1937), 103–4.
- GURI* *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, 1860–1946. Available online at <augusto.agid.gov.it>.
- NLW* *Neulateinische Wortliste. Ein Wörterbuch des Lateinischen von Petrarca bis 1700*, edited by Johann Ramming. Available online at <www.neulatein.de>.
- OO* 1–35 *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini*, edited by Edoardo and Duilio Susmel. Florence: La Fenice, 1951–63.
- S* *Scuola e cultura. Annali della istruzione media* 9, no. 2 (1933): 153–58.
- SUL* 1–4 *Per lo studio e l'uso del latino. Bollettino internazionale di studi-ricerche-informazioni*, edited by C. Galassi Paluzzi and G. Rispoli. Rome: Istituto di Studi Romani, 1939–42.

Abbreviations of journals are as in *L'Année Philologique*; abbreviations of ancient authors and works follow the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (fourth edition).

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Han Lamers and Bettina Reitz-Joosse
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The *Codex Fori Mussolini* in Context

1. Introduction

The year is 1932. Italy is celebrating the *Decennale*, the tenth anniversary of Fascist rule. During the inauguration of a new sports complex in Rome, the Fascist leader Benito Mussolini unveils a giant obelisk of white marble, bearing the Latin inscription MVSSOLINI DVX. Invisible to the cheering crowds, a metal box lies immured in the obelisk's base. It contains a number of gold coins and a Latin text, written on a piece of parchment: the *Codex Fori Mussolini*. This text, authored by the Classical scholar Aurelio Giuseppe Amatucci (1867–1960), presents a carefully constructed account of the rise of Italian Fascism and its leader. It was placed under the obelisk so that it might be rediscovered in the remote future, when it would convey to distant generations the Fascists' own vision of their achievements and place in history.

As a historical document, the *Codex Fori Mussolini* offers unique insights into the way in which Italian Fascism sought to manage its own future reception. Amatucci not only celebrates Fascism's political, cultural and architectural achievements, but also attempts to shape its 'prospective memory' by constructing the Fascist present as he wants it to be remembered once it has become distant past.¹ The principal aim of our edition and study of the *Codex* is therefore to render it available and comprehensible to scholars and students from a range of different disciplines. This first detailed study of a Fascist Latin text also offers new insights into the role of Roman antiquity under Italian Fascism.

Ancient Rome was a hugely important inspiration for the Italian Fascist movement. Already in April 1922, months before the Fascists seized power with the March on Rome, Benito Mussolini famously declared that

¹ On 'prospective memory' ('prospektive Erinnerung'), which constructs 'the present as a "future past"' ('die Gegenwart als eine "zukünftige Vergangenheit"'), see Assmann (1997: 169).

Rome is our point of departure and reference. It is our symbol and, if you wish, our myth. . . . Much of that which was the immortal spirit of Rome rises again in Fascism: the Fasces are Roman, our organization of combat is Roman, our pride and our courage is Roman: *Civis romanus sum*.²

Italian Fascists styled themselves as the descendants and heirs of the ancient Romans and their culture. They turned to Roman history and literature to find inspiration and examples for almost every aspect of their public life, and the *fasces* (a bundle of rods which symbolized a magistrate's power and jurisdiction in ancient Rome) became their symbol and lent the movement its name. The content of the *Codex Fori Mussolini*, the fact that it was written in Latin and the architectural context in which it was deposited all relate to this Fascist ideal of *romanità* (Romanness). Recent scholarship has emphasized the extent to which Fascist *romanità* was 'flexible', fused traditionalism and modernism and combined elements derived from Roman antiquity with others from the Italian Middle Ages and Renaissance.³ In our investigation of the *Codex* we further explore this notion of *romanità* as a complex of myths, values and symbols derived from ancient Rome to shape a modern and revolutionary future. By investigating the content and function of a Latin text in particular, we also add a new element to our current understanding of the role and content of *romanità*. The existence of a sizeable and diverse Fascist Latin literature is a very recent discovery, and the example of the *Codex* in particular allows us to understand the role that the Latin language played in shaping Italian Fascism.⁴

Critical attention to the *Codex* itself has so far been minimal. While its existence has been mentioned in a small number of studies,⁵ only Peter Aicher, in an article on the role of Augustus in the ideological scheme of the Foro Mussolini, has so far discussed small portions of the text,⁶ stating that 'this text

² OO 18: 160–1: 'Roma è il nostro punto di partenza e di riferimento; è il nostro simbolo o, se si vuole, il nostro mito . . . Molto di quel che fu lo spirito immortale di Roma risorge nel fascismo: romano è il Littorio, romana è la nostra organizzazione di combattimento, romano è il nostro orgoglio e il nostro coraggio: "Civis romanus sum".'

³ See, among others, Visser (1992), Stone (1999), Lazzaro and Crum (2005), Griffin (2007), Nelis (2011) and Arthurs (2012). The composite nature of *romanità* is a recurring theme in this book. On the use of Latin in relation to the Fascist notion of *romanità*, see section 5, on the layered 'Romanness' of the architectural and monumental context of the *Codex*, see sections 6 and 7, and on the 'Romanness' of the foundation deposit of which the *Codex* is part, see section 8.

⁴ See Lamers, Reitz-Joosse and Sacré (2014) and Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016).

⁵ Benton (2001: 97–8), Setta (1986: 161), Ponzio (2015: 63, 142).

⁶ Aicher (2000: 130–2).

... has never been studied, reprinted elsewhere, or translated out of Latin.⁷ Our book responds to Aicher's challenge by doing all of these things. We print the Latin text of the *Codex Fori Mussolini* with a list of textual variants (for comparing the different editions) and an English translation. Our translation makes no claim to elegance; it is designed to offer the reader easy access to the exact phrasing and expression of the Latin *Codex*. In a lemmatic commentary, we identify and briefly comment on names, dates and historical events referred to in the text and clarify Latin phrasing where this may affect readers' understanding of the text. We also elucidate rhetorical strategies and point to the relevance of specific expressions within the text's intellectual and monumental contexts. Throughout the book, references to the commentary's individual lemmata are marked by an asterisk.

The edition and commentary are preceded by an introductory chapter, which treats the text, its history, its physical location and its intellectual context. It consists of a number of sub-sections, which can be read in sequence or consulted independently. We open the introduction with an overview of the structure and content of the *Codex* (section 2: Structure and content) and the different printed editions which allow us access to the text, even though the original remains enclosed in the basis of the obelisk (section 3: Editions). In the following sections, we address the context within which the *Codex* was produced. The cult of *romanità* not only furnished Fascism with public rituals, myths and symbols; it also directly affected scholars and students dealing with Roman antiquity. Aurelio Giuseppe Amatucci, the author of the *Codex*, was an important figure in the cultural politics of the Fascist regime (section 4: The author of the *Codex Fori Mussolini*). In particular, as a prominent member of the Institute for Roman Studies, he aggressively promoted the resurgence of the Latin language as a vehicle for Fascist ideas, an ideal that he translated into action in his composition of the *Codex* (section 5: The *Codex* and the use of Latin under Fascism).

The renewed interest in ancient Rome also fuelled an unprecedented number of excavations of Roman sites across Rome and Italy, while Roman architectural styles were appropriated and developed in modern Fascist architecture. One example of such Romanizing architecture is the Foro

⁷ Aicher (2000: 130).

Mussolini (today's Foro Italico), a sports complex in the north of Rome. It was partly inspired by the recent excavations of the ancient imperial *fora*, but also creatively combined a range of other architectural models (section 6: The *Codex* and the Foro Mussolini). At the entrance of the Foro Mussolini stands the monumental obelisk under which the *Codex* was placed (section 7: The *Codex* under the obelisk). Together, the Foro and the obelisk (a traditional architectural expression of imperial power) offer a symbolically highly marked context for the document, testifying to the text's ideological importance. The *Codex* itself contains an extensive description and interpretation of both Foro and obelisk, which, we argue, was designed to guide future excavators or visitors towards the desired interpretation of the remains.

The notion of *romanità* that informs the *Codex* encompasses more than just ancient Rome. Its physical appearance evokes the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, later periods of Italian cultural prosperity that could be seen as a hinge between antiquity and modern Italy. The very practice of foundation deposits, which the *Codex*-deposit modifies in a number of ways, also has its roots both in antiquity and in the Renaissance (section 8: The *Codex* as a foundation deposit).

When in March 2013 we guided a group of graduate students round the Foro Italico, they were shocked to learn that even today, the *Codex* remains safely within the base of the obelisk. What if the text were indeed to be rediscovered in the future, and even worse, believed? One student suggested that it might be our moral duty to remove the *Codex* from under the obelisk, rather than allowing its makers' version of history to reach future generations. Another student suggested a different course of action: to leave the *Codex* in place, but to place a second text under the obelisk, one which would explain our own assessment of the history of the *ventennio* and put the *Codex* into perspective, with an account of Mussolini's crimes, Fascist totalitarian rule, racial laws and the Second World War. It is unlikely that either student's suggestion can be put into action in the near future; the weight and bulk of the marble obelisk provide the *Codex* with excellent protection. And yet these students expressed valid ethical concerns, which we have seriously taken into account in preparing this

edition. By republishing the *Codex* and making it widely available, are we not helping its Fascist creators to achieve exactly the kind of reception they were craving?

In Italy, the obelisk under which the *Codex* remains continues to inspire controversy and debate. In April 2015, the president of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini, caused an uproar in the Italian media by suggesting that it might be time to delete the Latin inscription MVSSOLINI DVX from the obelisk. Although Boldrini only suggested the excision very briefly in a personal conversation with a Second World War partisan fighter who had complained to her about the continued existence of the obelisk, she was immediately subjected to fierce criticism from the entire political spectrum. No major public voice in Italy supported the deletion of the historical inscription. The reaction of Matteo Orfini, leader of the centre-left Democratic Party, is indicative of the general sentiment:

We are an antifascist country. The principles of the fight against Fascism are written into our constitution. We do not need to delete our history, even if it is sometimes dramatic. I believe that *damnatio memoriae* is a sign of weakness and not of strength on the part of the one executing it.⁸

But if we decide not to excise the relics of an unwelcome past, we must find ways of talking about them and of confronting them by means other than a chisel. We hope that this book goes some way towards, figuratively, 'putting another text next to the *Codex*'. By analysing the author's rhetorical strategies and the Fascist instrumentalization of Classical antiquity and of the Latin language, we wish to contribute to an informed and critical reception of this text in the present and the future.

⁸ 'Noi siamo un Paese antifascista. I principi della lotta antifascista sono scritti nella nostra Costituzione. Non abbiamo bisogno di cancellare la nostra memoria, seppur a tratti drammatica. Credo che la *damnatio memoriae* sia un elemento di debolezza e non di forza da parte di chi la esercita', cited from Redazione Roma Online (2015). Many reactions were much more aggressive and much less nuanced: Boldrini's suggestion was also compared by some to the iconoclasm of ISIS and the Taliban (e.g. Angeli 2015).

2. Structure and content

The *Codex Fori Mussolini* is a prose text of 1,220 words. It consists of three sections of different length which are separated in the different printed editions by crosses, asterisks or blank lines (we do not know how they are demarcated in the parchment version). In this edition, we have separated the different sections by asterisks. The text as a whole tells the story of Italy and Fascism, more or less chronologically from the First World War up to the year 1932 (the date of the text and the obelisk).

1. The first of the three sections begins with the First World War and the unstable political situation in Italy that followed it. Mussolini himself is first mentioned in l. xix/24. He is not initially introduced by name, but simply as a 'VIR' ('MAN') of superhuman qualities and intellect who suddenly appears, determined to restore Italy to prosperity and power. Only in l. xxv/31 is his name revealed: "This man was BENITO MUSSOLINI."
2. The following section presents some of Mussolini's political projects in Italy from his seizure of power (1922), up to the moment of writing (c. 1932): the so-called Lateran Accords (an agreement between the Vatican and the Italian State), the strengthening of the Italian navy and air force, the introduction of the system of corporations. Amatucci then mentions Mussolini's building programme in Rome and elsewhere in Italy, road construction and excavations of ancient remains. He ends his enumeration with the strengthening of agriculture (for example by the draining of the Pontine Marshes) and the stabilization of the Lira. The second paragraph concludes with general praise of Mussolini's personal qualities and an affirmation of the new political system in Italy.
3. The third and longest section deals with the Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB) and its architectural prestige project, the Foro Mussolini. As the author explains, the ONB was instituted so that the state could take an active role in educating its youth and perpetuating the Fascist regime. He then introduces Renato Ricci, whom Mussolini appointed as the first head of the ONB, and details its educational activities, both physical and

spiritual. Next, the text deals with the Foro Mussolini, a project that Ricci conceived to further the ONB's activities and to commemorate the achievements of Fascism. After describing the location and the buildings and facilities of the Foro, Amatucci concludes with a section about the marble obelisk, in which he details the discovery of the block of marble from which it was carved, its transportation to Rome and its erection. The *Codex* ends by praising the obelisk's eternal commemorative power.

3. Editions

Although the parchment codex remains inaccessible under the obelisk at the Foro Italico in Rome, the Latin text of the *Codex Fori Mussolini* was printed four times in the 1930s. In chronological order, the publications in which the text appears are the following (with the bold capital letters indicating the abbreviation we use to refer to them):

B *Bollettino dell'Opera Nazionale Balilla* 7, no. 2 (15 November, 1932): 3–5.

S *Scuola e cultura. Annali della istruzione media* 9, no. 2 (1933): 153–8, republished as **C** *Codex Fori Mussolini* (Florence: Apud Felicem le Monnier, 1933).

F *Il Foro Mussolini*, edited by Opera Nazionale Balilla (Milan: Bompiani, 1937), pp. 103–4.

Comparison of the different editions (about which see below, pp. 21–2) yields a number of significant variant readings. Apart from the unknown text under the obelisk, there appear to be two main versions of the *Codex*. The earliest version was published in the journal of the ONB in 1932 (**B**), and was reprinted in 1937 in the appendix to a large and richly illustrated volume about the Foro, published by the ONB (**F**). Amatucci revised the text of **B** before publishing it again in the journal *Scuola e cultura* in 1933 (**S**), and the text of **S** was reissued as a separate offprint (**C**) in the same year. Although the Latin texts of **S** and **C** do not differ from each other (so that we can usually refer to them as **S/C**), **S** contains an important footnote by the editor which is missing in **C**.⁹

S/C offer the better text, free from most of the typographical and grammatical flaws in **B** which remained, and were augmented with new ones, in **F**. Typographical errors (such as *asque* instead of *atque* in l. lxi) most likely originated during the production process at the printer's workshop. Grammatical infelicities in **B** and **F** (for example, *se . . . restituere* instead of *restituere* in l. xxi)

⁹ Rome, Archivio Storico Capitolino, Fondo Amatucci, AMATUCCI Misc. I 5. Three other copies are in Campobasso (Biblioteca dell'Archivio di Stato and Biblioteca provinciale Pasquale Albino) and Avellino (Biblioteca provinciale S. e G. Capone). On the footnote only printed in **S**, see below, p. 18

were probably introduced by the author himself and then revised in *S/C*. Some changes in *S/C* bear upon the interpretation of the text, for example *asperrima* in *S/C* instead of *aspera* in *B* and *F*, *animum* instead of *animam*, or *iuventutis* instead of *adulescentium*.¹⁰ We discuss such revisions in the commentary wherever they are significant to the reader's understanding of the text.

We do not know which version of the text most resembles the one actually written on parchment and buried underneath the obelisk. Although the text of *B* is the closest chronologically to the text under the obelisk, it has also become so warped in the printing process that it must in any case differ considerably from the copy which Amatucci provided for the production of the official parchment document (see section 8). We have therefore chosen to print here what appears to be the latest known authorized version of the text, represented by *S/C* (thus respecting the *ultima manus* of the author).¹¹

¹⁰ See the commentary: **asperrima quaeque* (p. 102) and **iuventutis sodaliciis* (p. 119).

¹¹ For a complete list of variant readings, see p. 97.

4. The author of the *Codex Fori Mussolini*

In his work on the role of classical philologists under Italian Fascism, Fausto Giordano distinguishes two basic attitudes classical scholars could adopt towards the new regime of Mussolini. According to Giordano, some of them did not seek consensus with Fascism through their scholarship: they focused their energies instead on philological analyses of ancient texts that were not particularly prone to 'Fascist' readings. There were also classicists, however, who proved more sensitive to Fascism's arguments and adopted them into their scholarship in order to further their own interests.¹² While his Florentine mentor Girolamo Vitelli (1849–1935) is reckoned among the first group, the author of the *Codex*, Aurelio Giuseppe Amatucci (Sorbo Serpico, 1867–Rome, 1960), belongs to the second. We do not know what his personal opinions and loyalties were, but Amatucci clearly adapted his scholarly interests and his concern for national education to the new circumstances brought about by Mussolini's regime. His activities for the promotion of Latin in particular illustrate how Italian classicists could put their skills and expertise to the service of the regime.

When Amatucci wrote the *Codex Fori Mussolini* in the early 1930s, he was in his sixties and already had a productive career behind him.¹³ As a broadly interested historian of literature, he had written books on Latin literature (1910–16, 1929) but was also interested in Norwegian literature, especially the work of playwright and poet Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906).¹⁴ As a classical philologist, specializing in Latin comedy, he had published an edition of Plautus' *Amphitruo* (1903) and several philological essays (some of them in Latin). He also composed a general handbook on classical archaeology (1898) and a history of the ancient Mediterranean (1909–10) for use in schools.¹⁵

¹² Giordano (1993: 198).

¹³ Nazzaro (2009a) offers the most complete biography of Amatucci. Unless otherwise indicated, the dates below are taken from his essay. For discussions of Amatucci's work, see Alfonsi (1960), the essays collected in a special issue of *Aevum*, published in 1944 (18.1), and the essays gathered in Nazzaro (2009).

¹⁴ Amatucci published the first translation of Ibsen's play *The Pretenders* into Italian (1895) under the pseudonym 'A. G. Amato'. A short study on Ibsen appeared in 1901.

¹⁵ A complete overview of Amatucci's publications is offered in Nazzaro (2009b).

Besides his research activities, Amatucci had taught Latin and Greek in several high schools in southern Italy, before obtaining the *libera docenza* in Latin literature (a diploma demonstrating his ability to teach the language at universities) in 1910. He took up a lectureship of Latin at the Royal University of Palermo (1911–14) and thereafter taught as a freelance university teacher (*libero docente*) in Palermo, Naples and Rome for approximately twenty years. Apart from his scholarly endeavours and teaching duties, Amatucci was also part of the educational administration: he served as a school inspector (from 1910 onwards) and chaired the Inspectorate of the Palermo region (1917–21). In 1913, he was awarded a knighthood (*cavaliere*) in the Order of the Crown of Italy on the recommendation of the Minister of Education Luigi Credaro (1860–1939).¹⁶ By the time Mussolini seized power in 1922, Amatucci had already been a member of Italy's educational establishment for several decades and could be reckoned among the more visible classicists of his time.

Under Fascism, Amatucci specialized in Christian Latin literature, but generally published less on purely philological and literary issues. Instead, he focused on the role of classics in Italian education, which he discussed in a series of articles published in the period 1923–42.¹⁷ As early as 1925, he was appointed national inspector (*ispettore centrale*) of secondary schools at the Ministry of National Education and moved to Rome, where he spent most of his subsequent life. In this capacity he was closely involved in the Fascist administration, enforcing educational standards as well as loyalty to the Fascist regime in secondary schools.¹⁸ He also served as an examiner at the *concorsi*, the national licensure examinations for teachers.¹⁹ After Amatucci resigned his position of inspector in September 1935, he succeeded Gino Funaioli (1878–1958) as the chair of Latin at the Catholic University Sacro Cuore at Milan,

¹⁶ See *GURI* (17 February 1915), 863.

¹⁷ See Polara (2009: 56) and the bibliography of this period in Nazzaro (2009b: 140–4).

¹⁸ There is an enlightening episode about Amatucci's time as a school inspector under Fascism in the autobiography of Giuseppe Morabito (1900–97), teacher and author of several surviving (non-Fascist) Latin poems. See Morabito (1972: 109–15) with the discussion in Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016: 219–20). Additional evidence of Amatucci's activity as an inspector is in a letter of Arnaldo Paolini (10 December 1932), in which the writer complains about Amatucci's alleged manoeuvres to discredit him. Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Carteggio Giulio Bertoni, Fascicoli Arnaldo Paolini, Inv. 242.000, cc. 35'–36'.

¹⁹ In a letter to Giulio Bertoni (Faenza, 14 March 1938), Eugenio Tomasini records that Amatucci was regarded as a 'rather demanding examiner' ('un esaminatore piuttosto esigente') by his colleague in the examination board, Albano Sorbelli (1875–1944). Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Carteggio Giulio Bertoni, Fascicoli Eugenio Tomasini, Inv. 242.000, cc. 19'–20'.

which he maintained until his final retirement in 1944.²⁰ He remained active as a scholar until his death in Rome in April 1960.²¹

Although Amatucci was a productive scholar, it seems that he was not generally regarded as one of the foremost Italian Latinists. He obtained a chair of Latin only at the advanced age of sixty-eight and by a slightly unusual route.²² A committee report evaluating his application for a professorship in Messina gives an impression of how his work was valued by contemporaries in 1912, when Amatucci had been active as a scholar for almost two decades: the search committee praises the applicant's wide-ranging industriousness but also finds that his work 'errs in its hazardous conclusions, as in his studies of Archaic poetry, and sometimes in its doubtful methodology, as in his studies of Plautus, which are certainly erudite and penetrating but rarely acceptable as regards their conclusions.'²³ Some modern scholars have offered a more positive assessment of Amatucci's work: Giovanni Polara and Luigi Pizzolato, for instance, praise his contributions to the history of Christian Latin literature,²⁴ and his *Storia della letteratura latina cristiana (History of Latin Christian Literature)*, first printed in 1929 and reissued in 1955, is still cited as a major contribution to the field.²⁵

²⁰ During this period, Amatucci was also a member of the National Council of Education, Science and the Arts (in any case in 1939, for which see 'Notiziario' 1939: 11).

²¹ Amatucci taught Latin literature and Latin composition, both at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and at the Apostolico Istituto Sacro Cuore in Castelnuovo Fogliani.

²² Amatucci's professorship in Milan was due to a special arrangement made by the university's founder and first rector Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M. (1878–1959). As Amatucci had never participated in the necessary university examinations (the *concorsi universitari*), he was strictly speaking not allowed to hold a chair as a full professor (*professore ordinario*). As Gemelli later explained, he decided as an exception to appoint Amatucci to the chair of Latin as a *libero docente* because of the scarcity of mature Latinists at the time, his personal esteem for Amatucci's efforts for Italian culture and education as well as the favourable advice of unnamed others (see Gemelli 1944, with Nazzaro 2009: 26–30 and Pizzolato 2009: 63–4).

²³ '... la produzione dell'Amatucci pecca talora per conclusioni arrischiate, come nelle ricerche di letteratura arcaica, tal altra per incertezza di metodo, come negli studi plautini, dotti ed acuti ma raramente accettabili nelle loro conclusioni.' Rome, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero della pubblica istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione superiore, Divisione prima, Fascicoli personali dei professori ordinari, 2° versamento, Prima serie (1900–1940), Inv. 16/052, 1, Amatucci. For Amatucci's attempts at being admitted to the *libera docenza*, see also the material collected in Rome, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero della pubblica istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione superiore, Divisione prima, Fascicoli personali dei liberi docenti, 1° versamento, Prima serie (1910–1930), Inv. 16/050, Amatucci.

²⁴ See Polara (2009) and Pizzolato (2009). The city of Rome also honoured Amatucci by naming a street after him in the eastern Gianicolense district.

²⁵ See Di Bernardino (2015: 62), Pizzolato (2009: 66) and Polara (2009: 62). Reviewers mostly note the author's wide reading, enthusiasm and pleasant style but also emphasize his provocative judgements on individual authors and his tendency to exaggerate the Roman or Latin elements in early

By the time he published the *Codex* in 1932, Amatucci had become deeply involved in the cultural politics of Fascist Italy. Most importantly, he was an active member of the Institute for Roman Studies (Istituto di Studi Romani, hereafter ISR), founded by Carlo Galassi Paluzzi in 1925 in order to encourage academic study and the general public's familiarity with Rome in all its aspects from antiquity to the Fascist present.²⁶ Under the honorary presidency of Mussolini, the ISR helped to shape the cultural politics of the regime. As a member of the Institute, Amatucci offered courses for the wider public on one of his main areas of specialization: Latin Christian literature.²⁷ He was also involved in several of the ISR's prestigious book projects that were to promote the Fascist ideal of *romanità*. He contributed to the volume *Africa romana* (*Roman Africa*, 1935), which was published during the Ethiopian campaign (1935–6), and he originally planned *La letteratura di Roma imperiale* (*The Literature of Imperial Rome*, 1947) as part of the ambitious thirty-volume *Storia di Roma* (*History of Rome*), the idea for which had been suggested by Mussolini himself.²⁸

The composition and publication of the *Codex Fori Mussolini* falls within a period of heightened institutional support for the Latin language, and its author played a key part in several activities organized by the ISR to promote it. For instance, Amatucci sat on the ISR's steering committee for the enhancement of the study and use of Latin, which supervised the organization of national competitions in Latin prose composition and conversation.²⁹ As a

Christianity in the West, while downplaying its Greek and oriental aspects. See the reviews in *Aevum* 2 (1929) 4: 653–7; *AJPh* 50 (1929) 2: 214; *RIC* 58 (1930) 92–4; *BAGB* 3 (1931) 185; *Aevum* 29 (1955) 5: 582–3; *AC* 25 (1956) 1: 201; *RPh* 30 (1956) 338–9; *RFIC* 84 (1956) 88–91; *CR* 6 (1956) 3/4: 249–50; *AJPh* 77 (1956) 4: 445–7; *Gnomon* 29 (1957) 2: 148–9.

²⁶ For a concise overview of the history and agenda of the ISR, see Visser (2014). A balanced account of the role of the ISR in Fascist cultural politics is Arthurs (2012: 29–49); see also Nelis (2010) with a rich bibliography. On the role of the ISR-journal *Roma* in Fascist constructions of *romanità*, see La Penna (2001).

²⁷ In the academic year 1930–1, Amatucci organized a course on Latin Christian literature, recorded in *Ann. Inst.* 3: 59, 106.

²⁸ See Canfora (1980: 94–5) with *Ann. Inst.* 7: 187 and Polara (2009: 49). Additionally, Amatucci was secretary of the Committee for the publication of the national edition of Greek and Latin classics, instigated by Minister of Education Pietro Fedele (Minister 1925–9) and executed *iussu Beniti Mussolini* (Scotti and Cristiano 2002: 345–51, esp. 345). The other members of the committee were Vittorio Scialoja, Nicola Festa, Ettore Pais, Giorgio Pasquali, Remigio Sabbadini, Vincenzo Ussani, Girolami Vitelli and Domenico Bartolini (the Minister's decree of 14 May 1928 by which the committee was formed is available in Ascenzi and Sani 2009: 108–09).

²⁹ *Ann. Inst.* 4: 103.

representative of the Ministry of National Education, he was one of the members of the jury that awarded prizes at the first contest of Latin prose composition organized by the Institute in 1934.³⁰ Additionally, Amatucci was a member of the ISR-committee charged with supervising the compilation of Italian–Latin and Latin–Italian dictionaries.³¹ Even before the Institute launched its campaign to promote Latin in 1933, he had already formulated his views on the role of the language in the culture of Italian Fascism in two articles published in *Scuola e cultura* in 1929 and 1930 (his own writings on the cultural role of Latin under Fascism are further explored in section 5 below). Through his involvement in the Fascization of secondary education, his participation in the ISR's activities, his publications on Latin as a Fascist language and his authorship of the *Codex*, Amatucci's career showcases a whole number of ways in which a Classical scholar could actively support the Fascist regime.³²

Despite Amatucci's involvement in the promotion of Latin under Fascism, the precise circumstances under which he composed the *Codex Fori Mussolini* remain obscure. We assume that Renato Ricci, head of the Fascist youth organization, played an important role, since it was he who directed the entire Foro project. A direct link between Amatucci as national inspector at the Ministry of National Education and the head of the Fascist youth organization is likely, and the Latinist may have been invited by Ricci himself to contribute a piece of commemorative Latin to the Foro project.³³ In any case, there is no

³⁰ Gionta (2007: 217). Later he was involved in plans to reform the national training of Latin teachers, also coordinated by the ISR. See here Amatucci (1942), *SUL* 4.1: 29–30 and *Ann. Inst.* 13–14: 86.

³¹ Galassi Paluzzi (1938: 3); *Ann. Inst.* 9–10: 118, 127; *Ann. Inst.* 11–12: 110; *Ann. Inst.* 13–14: 85. For a summary of the committee's activities, see *Ann. Inst.* 9–10: 118 (for the year 1936–7); *Ann. Inst.* 9–10: 127–9 (for the year 1937–8); *Ann. Inst.* 11–12: 110–11 (for the year 1939–40); *Ann. Inst.* 13–14: 85–6 (for the year 1940–1).

³² The period of Amatucci's life under Fascism is considerably less well-studied than the periods before and after the *ventennio fascista*. The essays collected in Nazzaro (2009) emphasize Amatucci's achievements as a Latinist, but attach little importance to his active involvement in the regime's cultural politics (if they discuss his activities during the *ventennio* at all). For example, Polara (2009: 56) regards Amatucci's work on the role of Latin in Fascist Italy (pp. 18–21 below) as an 'unavoidable pledge of commitment to the current ideology in 1929' ('inevitabile pegno pagato all'ideologia corrente nel 1929') (emphasis added), while in fact it was one of Amatucci's ways of actively lending support to the regime's cultural programme.

³³ Searches in the archives of the Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale (1929–44) at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome have not yielded further details about the circumstances under which Amatucci composed the *Codex*.

doubt that Amatucci is the principal author of the *Codex*. Although the original document under the obelisk may not identify the author by name, Amatucci is cited as the author of the *Codex* by contemporaries and in S and C he published the text under his own name ('Aurelius Iosephus Amatucci').³⁴

³⁴ See Amatucci (1932: 3): 'il testo latino, dovuto al Prof. A. G. Amatucci'; Amatucci (1933a: 8): 'hic codex ... latine scriptus ab Iosepho Aurelio Amatucci'; Amatucci (1933b: 153): 'il testo apprestato da A. G. Amatucci'; Amatucci (1937: 103): 'il Codice del Foro Mussolini dettato da A. G. Amatucci'. See also the bibliography in Nazzaro (2009: 142), where the *Codex* is listed among Amatucci's publications.

5. The *Codex* and the use of Latin under Fascism

Why was the *Codex* written in Latin? As in most other European countries, the use of Latin as a literary language had never really disappeared in Italy.³⁵ In the decades before the emergence of Fascism, Italian Latinists had sometimes used the language of ancient Rome for learned essays, commemorative inscriptions, and poetry and speeches written for specific occasions.³⁶ The author of the *Codex*, too, had published a small volume of Latin elegies, dedicated to his wife, in 1897.

Although the production of Latin texts was therefore not in itself unusual, the role of the language changed fundamentally during the *ventennio fascista*. As the language of Rome, Latin acquired a new and specific ideological and cultural importance.³⁷ Consequently, the production of Latin texts and the visibility of Latin in public life increased due to robust institutional support for the study and use of the language. With the explicit support of Mussolini himself, the ISR developed a concerted programme for the revival of Latin both inside and outside Italy. Apart from contests in Latin composition, this included the preparation of dictionaries for use in schools, the compilation of specialized lexica to turn Latin into an up-to-date international academic language and the establishment of the ‘National Translation Centre’, which produced Latin summaries of academic texts in order to enhance their accessibility.³⁸ From 1939 onwards, the ISR also published the journal *Per lo studio e l'uso del latino* (*For the Study and Use of Latin*, hereafter *SUL*). Designed as an international platform for the promotion of the use and study of the Latin language in the world, the *SUL* gathered contributions about the state of Latin

³⁵ For an overview of the almost continuous tradition of Neo-Latin literature in Italy, see IJsewijn-Jacobs (1961), Giustiniani (1979), Feo (1986), IJsewijn (1990: 54–82), and Marsh (2015).

³⁶ For the Neo-Latin literature of nineteenth-century Italy, see Giustiniani (1979) and Fera, Gionta and Morabito (2006), with particular emphasis on poetry.

³⁷ The increased significance of Latin under Fascism is briefly mentioned in Bordoni and Contessa (2009: 102), Waquet (2002: 262, 265–6), Golino (1994: 61–2) and Canfora (1980: 96, 101–13). It is, however, not discussed in connection with the role of classical scholars under Fascism (e.g. Arthurs 2012, Nelis 2011, Näf 2001, Cagnetta and Schiano 1999, Giordano 1993 and Cagnetta 1979).

³⁸ Carlo Galassi Paluzzi's endeavours to promote Latin are briefly discussed by Gionta (2006: 211–14). On the role of the ISR in the revival of Latin in the period 1939–43, as well as its relation to the nationwide educational reforms of the regime, see esp. Fedeli (1977).

studies from all over the world as well as reflections on the role of Latin (often themselves composed in the language).³⁹

In large part due to this institutional support, the *ventennio* saw a diverse production of original Latin literature with explicitly Fascist themes, ranging from lyric odes in praise of Mussolini to prose orations extolling the new order, from epics on Italy's martial exploits in Africa to Latin inscriptions on old and new monuments.⁴⁰ The *Codex* forms part of this Fascist Latin literature, and its very existence and forms of expression are closely connected with contemporary ideas about the cultural role of the Latin language within the new regime.

Latin as a Fascist language

The use and study of Latin during the *ventennio* must be seen as part of the Fascist cult of 'Romanness', or *romanità*. Signs, symbols and myths associated with ancient Rome were absolutely central to the way in which the Fascists presented themselves, and the language of Rome formed part of this all-encompassing Fascist evocation of ancient Rome. Even so, the ultimate realization of this 'Romanness' was not envisaged as a historical restoration of the realities of the Roman Empire, but as its *renewal* in modern times and in modern ways.⁴¹ The Fascists' orientation towards the Roman past was to promote something essentially new and modern: the Fascist revolution that, they hoped, would result in a new world order, or *novus ordo*, as Amatucci translated it in the *Codex*.⁴²

³⁹ On the role of the *SUL* (issued from 1939 until 1942) in the ISR's campaign to promote Latin as an international language, see Fedeli (1977: 217–22).

⁴⁰ Fascist Latinity is not discussed in the most authoritative accounts of Neo-Latin literature in Italy, mentioned in n. 35. For a first overview of the Latin literature of Fascism, see Lamers, Reitz-Joosse and Sacré (2014) and, more recently, Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016) (see also Lamers and Reitz-Joosse 2014). Individual Fascist Latin compositions have hardly been studied. Exceptions are Bragantini (1998), Aicher (2000: 130–2), Scriba (2003), Fera (2006: 311–16) and De Vries and Tacoma (2014).

⁴¹ Griffin (2007: 222). Gentile (2009: 148–9) points out that the Fascists interpreted *romanità* 'modernistically': for them, the ancient myth of Rome is not a source of nostalgia for lost greatness but a source of action for the future.

⁴² The myth of Rome was not a Fascist invention: it had always been central to Italian nationalism. As Gentile (2009: 46) put it, 'it was impossible for the Italians of unified Italy to escape from the myth of Rome, whatever meaning it was given'. Fascist *romanità* thus represents an appropriation and modification of previous 'myths' of Rome. On the role of Rome in the formation of Italy's national identity, see esp. Gentile (2009: 42–50).

The Latin language, too, was to be part of this new order. It was not simply regarded as a relic of the ancient past, but as a *modern* language apt to express the revolutionary ideas of Fascism. Latin did 'not belong to the remote past but to today and tomorrow'.⁴³ The edition of the *Codex* in the journal *Scuola e cultura* (1933) contains an opening note by the editor which illustrates this Fascist view of the Latin language:

We are delighted to publish the text prepared by A.G. AMATUCCI for the parchment codex that is placed in the base of the monolith at the FORO MUSSOLINI in remembrance of Fascism's tenth anniversary. For the truly Roman greatness of events, there is no *praeconium* more worthy than the language of Rome, which in this illustrious document reveals its perfect capacity to express, in organic synthesis, thoughts and facts of modern life.⁴⁴

Latin was also regarded as a specifically *Fascist* language, and Mussolini himself declared that Latin was 'the language of our times, of our very difficult but also very beautiful Fascist times'.⁴⁵

Amatucci was one of the first Latinists to explicitly theorize this new cultural role of Latin under the Fascist regime. The notion that the ancient language of Rome was especially capable of expressing a modern and Fascist worldview features prominently in Amatucci's own work. In his essay 'Latin and the Rebirth of our Nation' ('Il latino e la nostra rinascita nazionale'), published in the same journal as his *Codex* in 1929, he claimed that Latin composition in Italian schools ought to be a constitutive part of the 'reevocation of the Roman world' which was, according to him, one of the great achievements of Fascism.⁴⁶ In another article about Latin translation, published a year later, he similarly argued that writing in Latin was crucial for anyone who wanted to immerse himself in the 'sacred thought of Rome' ('pensiero Romano consacrato'). In this way, Amatucci, like the publisher of his *Codex*, connected

⁴³ From *Il mattino* of 9 July 1942, cited in *SUL* 4.1: 51–2.

⁴⁴ Amatucci (1933b: 153): 'Siamo lieti di pubblicare il testo apprestato da A. G. AMATUCCI per il codice in pergamena collocato a ricordo del primo Decennale fascista nella base del monolito al FORO MUSSOLINI. Alla grandezza veramente romana degli eventi nessun più degno *praeconium* che la lingua di Roma, la quale nell'insigne documento rivela la sua perfetta capacità ad esprimere in organica sintesi pensieri e fatti della vita contemporanea.'

⁴⁵ 'È la lingua del nostro tempo, di questo durissimo ma bellissimo tempo fascista', cited from *SUL* 3.1: 35. See Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016: 229).

⁴⁶ Amatucci (1929: 16): 'rievocazione del mondo romano'.

the use and study of Latin with the notion of *romanità* that found, according to them, its fullest expression in Fascism. Apart from a means of re-evoking ancient Rome, Amatucci also regarded Latin as a privileged means of expressing *modern* life. Now that Italy was awakening to new glory, it was

an elevated sign of our regained national spirit to express with classical majesty on solemn occasions our *new* sentiments, *new* thoughts and *new* plans – all springing from antiquity – in this language that was specifically made to address the World and by means of which Italian thought, illuminated by Rome, created a world civilization.⁴⁷

Just like the editor of *Scuola e cultura* (who argued that the Latin language was perfectly suited to the ‘thoughts and facts of modern life’), Amatucci stresses the role of Latin in establishing a meaningful connection between past, present and future.

Latin as a national and international language

Amatucci suggested that as a national language, Latin cemented the relationship between ancient Rome and the Italian nation. According to him, Latin was the language in which ‘Italian thought’ and Rome had first merged to create a world civilization. Already in his history of the ancient Mediterranean (first published in 1910), he had commented on the close relationship between Rome, the Italian nation and Latin. He contended that the ‘Italian nation’ (*nazione italiana*) had initially emerged through a process of ever-increasing orientation toward Rome, or Romanization. Because of Sulla’s reforms in particular (80–82 BC), the entire peninsula had adopted one legal code and one language: Roman law and Latin. According to Amatucci, the Italian nation had come into existence through the resulting decline and collapse of regional diversity.⁴⁸ For the author of the *Codex*, Latin was, historically speaking, closely tied up with the emergence of the Italian nation. This explains why he regarded

⁴⁷ Amatucci (1929: 25): ‘... un alto segno del nostro riacquistato spirito nazionale l’esprimere con maestà classica in solenni circostanze, i nostri sentimenti *nuovi*, i *nuovi* pensieri e i *nuovi* propositi, che tutti dall’Antico procedono, in quella lingua, che fu plasmata per parlare all’Orbe e per mezzo della quale il pensiero italiano, illuminato da Roma, creò nel mondo una civiltà ...’ (emphasis added).

⁴⁸ Amatucci (1910: 173).

it as a specifically *national* language whose renewal also signalled a national revival for the Italians. Amatucci's 'nationalization' of Latin even led him to presenting laxity in Latin studies as an act of 'true civil desertion', now that Fascism had rekindled the cult of *romanità*.⁴⁹

For Amatucci, Latin also evoked the World Empire of which Rome had once been the centre. Together with the idea that Latin 'was made to address the World', the idea that it had shaped a world civilization entailed the unstated promise that, through Latin, the Italian nation could again gain eminence in the world. Amatucci was not alone in emphasizing that Latin was a world language. His colleague at the ISR, Vincenzo Ussani (1870–1952), emphasized the 'unifying mission' ('missione unificatrice') of Latin in the history of civilization.⁵⁰ The notion that Latin had been the language of the civilized world generally fuelled Fascist cultural imperialism and inspired ambitions to restore the language to its former prominence. There was ample institutional support to promote the language worldwide. The ISR was to establish Italian dominance in Latin, and it actively promoted Rome as the centre of Latin studies worldwide. In addition, the short-lived Action Committee for the Universality of Rome (Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma, CAUR) stressed the use of Latin to support universal Fascism of the 'Roman' kind abroad and promoted the language of Rome as a common language for an international Fascist union under Italian leadership.⁵¹ Furthermore, Amatucci's notion of Latin as a language specifically 'made to address the World' anticipates imperialist notions of the language that would develop more fully during the later 1930s, and especially after the declaration of Empire in 1936.⁵²

In the *Codex Fori Mussolini*, Amatucci put into practice the principles expounded in his theoretical essays, using Latin on a solemn occasion – namely, the tenth anniversary of the Fascist Revolution – to shape a particular vision of Fascism for an audience in both the present and future. His use of Latin was to exemplify the vitality of *romanità* under Fascism. It symbolized

⁴⁹ Amatucci (1930: 49).

⁵⁰ Ussani (1939: 203).

⁵¹ The CAUR were founded in 1933, but quickly lost influence as National Socialism gained power in Germany. They officially ceased to exist in 1939. On Latin as an international language, see Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016: 232–7).

⁵² On imperialist notions of Latin, see Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016: 237–45).

the revival of the Italian nation under Mussolini who, according to the *Codex*, had restored 'to the Italians that Italy, which the ancient Romans had made the light of the entire world'. Finally, in the *Codex*, the language of Rome also suggests the international pretensions and imperialist ideals that the text's content and architectural context (the obelisk in the Foro Mussolini) make explicit.⁵³

Latin and the multiple audiences of the *Codex*

Apart from having an ideological function, Latin was also a means of communication, and the choice for the language of Rome in the *Codex* has implications for the audience of the text. As the text was issued without an Italian translation, it was apparently not intended for the general Italian public but for a very specific circle of readers. Who were these readers?

In order to answer this question, we must look at the kinds of publications in which the *Codex* circulated. As we indicated in section 3 above, the text was published four times in editions accessible to contemporaries: in the bulletin of the 'Opera Nazionale Balilla' (1932), in the Fascist journal *Scuola e cultura* (*School and Culture*) (1933), as a separately executed offprint from that journal (1933), and in an illustrated volume on the Foro, entitled *Il Foro Mussolini* (1937). Although the text printed in the bulletin of the ONB must have been distributed widely among members of the local sections of the organization, the multiple errors introduced into the text, presumably during typesetting, suggest that the *Codex* was not intended to be read closely by the ONB members. Rather, its placement in the bulletin served to showcase the importance of the obelisk's inauguration and the intellectual and cultural capital at the disposal of the ONB and its leadership. The errors remained uncorrected when the text was reprinted in *Il Foro Mussolini* in 1937. This volume was probably issued in a small print run and consisted mostly of maps, colour plates and photographs of the Foro Mussolini. The Latin text was printed as an appendix, in a smaller type than the remainder of the book, which again suggests that the Latin text was included for the sake of

⁵³ On the imperialist message of the Foro Italico, see below, pp. 37–9.

completeness rather than as a text that the reader was actually expected to translate and peruse in detail.

Publication in the journal *Scuola e cultura*, on the other hand, points to a more serious audience of classicists, teachers and pedagogues. It also suggests the possibility that the *Codex* may have been read in the classroom, just as Francesco Stanco's *Epitome*, a compendium of all aspects of modern Fascist Italy (1935) entirely written in Latin, which took young readers from the Fascist revolution to the establishment of the Italian Empire.⁵⁴ The offprints from the same journal were presumably circulated among Amatucci's colleagues and correspondents, who again formed a small but expert readership that would have been capable of translating and appreciating the *Codex*.⁵⁵ These contemporary audiences – interested and competent Latinists and perhaps students – are the target audiences of most Latin compositions during the *ventennio*.⁵⁶

But while the choice for classical Latin (and absence of a translation) severely curtailed contemporary readers' access to the text, they were not Amatucci's main concern. As a foundation deposit, the *Codex* mainly addresses a readership in the remote future, and Latin was regarded as a language especially capable of transcending large temporal divides. Its survival from the distant past naturally inspired hope for a similarly long reach into the future. For example, when in 1936, Nicola Festa (Professor of Greek at the Royal University of Rome) published a Latin translation of Mussolini's 'imperial' orations, his publisher wrote that the Latin language invested the speeches with the 'monumental form' appropriate to a 'historical document destined to defy the centuries'.⁵⁷ This function of the language is closely connected to the material form of the *Codex*: since all ancient Latin literature had survived until the present in the form of manuscripts written on parchment, the *Codex Fori Mussolini*, too, was sent on its journey through the ages as a Latin text in the form of a parchment codex (see further section 8 below).

⁵⁴ On Stanco's Latin schoolbook and how it was received, see Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016: 229).

⁵⁵ For details on the offprint, see p. 8 above.

⁵⁶ See Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016: 221–3).

⁵⁷ Rispoli in Mussolini (1936: 5): 'la forma monumentale di un documento storico destinato a sfidare i secoli'.

Amatucci's *Codex*: shaping Fascism in Latin

The ideological significance of Latin under Fascism as well as the language's assumed potential to transcend time explain *why* the *Codex* was written in the language of ancient Rome. The text's specific forms of expression also shed further light on the use of Latin under Fascism and illuminate *how* Amatucci used the language to convey an image of Fascism to the future.

Distinctive features of the Latin *Codex* are its length, its style and the way in which it incorporates and activates ancient sources. Rather than employing the lapidary style of inscriptions usually employed in foundation deposits (see p. 76 and p. 81 below), Amatucci writes in flowing, periodic sentences, which abound in dramatic rhetorical devices such as tricola and asyndeta. His style most closely resembles that of Cicero, although the influence of Livy is also strong. Despite creating a façade of stylistic classicism, Amatucci sometimes left Italian phrases untranslated (for example, the Mussolinian motto 'libro e moschetto').⁵⁸ In one case, he even changed a translation in a later edition in order to evoke more clearly a key term of Italian Fascism: *adulescentium sodaliciis* ('the colleges of young men') was altered to *iuventutis sodaliciis* ('the colleges of youth'), since the Latin word *iuventus* specifically activated the concept of *giovinezza* ('youth'), an important Fascist ideal and also the title of the de-facto Fascist national anthem.⁵⁹

Stylistic similarities with ancient Latin authors are partly achieved by incorporating entire phrases from classical Latin texts into the *Codex*. For example, the phrase 'in suis studiis atque operibus cessarent' (l. xl) derives from a treatise by Cicero about old age (*Sen.* 13: 'neque umquam in suo studio atque opere cessavit'). In many cases, there seem to be no specific connections between the original provenance of individual phrases and their reuse in the *Codex*.⁶⁰ But by consistently weaving ancient Roman idiom into his new Fascist text, the author translates into practice his theoretical argument that the ancient language of Rome is a perfect fit for modern, and especially Fascist,

⁵⁸ The phrase is probably not translated because it was attributed directly to Mussolini. The text also contains a number of potential Italicisms, e.g. 'Flumentana' instead of *Flumoniensis* (l. lxxv and **Flumentana*, p. 113).

⁵⁹ Falasca-Zamponi (1997: 72).

⁶⁰ For further examples, see the commentary **incerto Marte* (p. 101), **opinionum commentis* (p. 103) and **cives omnes in officio contineret* (p. 110).

ideas (see above, pp. 18–19). While such quotations from classical Latin authors are devoid of specific significance, this is not the case for other quotations, whose original context stands in a meaningful relation to the content of the *Codex*.⁶¹ By citing and incorporating lines from some of the most famous Latin texts of the Augustan period, Amatuucci added new layers of meaning to his story of Fascism and its leader.

The very first words of the *Codex*, referring to the First World War, immediately recall one of the most famous book-openings of Latin literature. ‘Bellum maxime omnium memorabile quae unquam gesta essent’ (‘The most memorable war of all that have ever been fought’) is taken from the work *Ab Urbe Condita*, a history of Rome from its foundation to the Augustan age by the Roman historian Livy (Titus Livius, 59 BC–AD 17). At the beginning of book 21, Livy writes:

In this preface to a part of my history I may properly assert what many an historian has declared at the outset of his entire work, to wit, that the war which I am going to describe was the most memorable of all wars ever waged (*bellum maxime omnium memorabile quae unquam gesta sint*) – the war, that is, which, under the leadership of Hannibal, the Carthaginians waged with the Roman People.⁶²

In these lines, the Roman historian refers to the beginning of the Second Punic war (218–201 BC), fought between Rome and Carthage under Hannibal’s leadership. By incorporating Livy’s words into the *Codex*, Amatuucci not only suggests a parallel between the First World War and the Second Punic War, which had brought Rome to the brink of disaster and left it undisputed mistress of the Mediterranean. It also parallels the rise to greatness of two ‘Roman empires’ as a result of their hard-won victories. Italy’s victory in the First World War and the chaos following it forms the background for Amatuucci’s account of the rise and triumph of Fascism (see above p. 6 and **bellum maxime ... gesta essent*, p. 99).

⁶¹ For examples discussed in the commentary see **in populi ... coaluissent* (p. 101), **virtute atque humanitate* (p. 102), **divina mente* (p. 107), **absolutam patriae imaginem* (p. 114) and **locus est amoenissimus* (p. 115).

⁶² Livy 21.1.1: ‘In parte operis mei licet mihi praefari, quod in principio summae totius professi plerique sunt rerum scriptores, bellum maxime omnium memorabile quae unquam gesta sint me scripturum, quod Hannibale duce Carthaginenses cum populo Romano gessere.’ Translation: Foster (1929).

The special connection between ancient Rome and the new Fascist regime is even more clearly suggested in the motto of the *Codex*: 'magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo' ('the great order of the ages is born afresh'). These words are directly derived from the fourth poem of the *Eclogues* by the Roman poet Publius Vergilius Maro (70–19 BC).⁶³ The ancient poem describes the birth of a divine child and predicts that this child will bring about a new Golden Age (*Ecl.* 4.4–7). Vergil wrote the *Eclogues* during the transition between the gruelling civil wars that toppled the Roman republic, and the Augustan principate. By opening the *Codex* with this Vergilian line, Amatucci links the Fascist revolution of his own time to what has been called the 'Augustan revolution': Emperor Augustus' radical restructuring of the Roman political system, which transformed the Roman republic into a de-facto monarchy, but also brought about a period of comparative stability and great cultural prosperity in Rome. In the text of the *Codex*, Amatucci cites the phrase a second time, with a key modification: in l. lvi he writes that on 28 October 1922, the day of the March on Rome, 'novusque ab integro saeculorum ordo eis natus est' ('a new order of the ages was born afresh [for the Italians]'). By formulating the achievement of Fascism in terms not only of another *magnus ordo* (a great order) but also a *novus ordo* (a new order), the author emphasizes the historical parallel between the two transformative moments in history, as well as stressing the radical *renewal* of Italy under the leadership of Mussolini.⁶⁴

While phrases adapted from classical Latin authors serve to cement the relationship between the 'Augustan revolution' and the new order of Fascism, Amatucci also uses them to shape the image of Fascism's leader. For example, in his eulogy of Mussolini, the author of the *Codex* describes the 'Dux' as 'ready to undertake or to undergo anything bravely ('ad omnia fortia facienda et

⁶³ Cf. Aicher (2000: 131–2).

⁶⁴ Amatucci also suggests such a parallel between the Augustan and Fascist revolutions with the phrase 'in re publica reficienda renovandaque' (ll. lxxv–lxxvi), which evokes Augustus's claims to have 'restored' or 'saved' the *res publica* (compare formulations such as *rem publicam restituere* and *rem publicam conservare*: cf. **re publica reficienda renovandaque* (p. 113)). Again, Amatucci's modification is significant: through his choice of *reficere* and *renovare* he evokes the parallel with the period of Augustan restoration after a period of chaos, yet also conveys Fascism's revolutionary ambitions and its claims to national renewal and to reinvigoration. For further Augustan parallels, see also **divina mente* (p. 107) and **absolutam patriae imaginem* (p. 114).

patienda paratus', ll. xx–xxi). This phrase recalls the words ascribed to Mucius Scaevola, a hero of the Roman republic, by the Roman historian Livy, who describes how Scaevola, after speaking these famous words, burned away his own right hand in a sacrificial fire without showing any sign of pain to impress the Etruscan king Lars Porsena with an example of Roman bravery (Livy 2.12.9: 'et facere et pati fortia Romanum est'). Scaevola's saying was frequently cited in Fascist Latin literature and inscriptions, since it simultaneously expressed an important Fascist male virtue (bravery) and defined it as typically Roman ('Romanum est').⁶⁵

Amatucci also uses specific phrases and expressions to 'sacralize' Fascism and endow its leader, Mussolini, with a messianic aura – a messiah who would bring about the Italian people's delivery in the here and now, from war, poverty and powerlessness.⁶⁶ Amatucci's allusion to Vergil's fourth *Eclogue* at the beginning of the *Codex* not only associates the 'Duce' with the Emperor Augustus, but also with the Christian messiah. In the Christian exegetical tradition of this poem, the 'divine child' prophesied by Vergil as the bringer of peace was since the fourth century AD identified as Christ himself.⁶⁷ Amatucci further develops this connection between Christian and Fascist deliverance throughout the *Codex*, and he presents Mussolini as a messianic figure by combining classical Latin idiom with biblical language. For instance, he writes that Mussolini had restored 'to the Italians that Italy which the ancient Romans had made the light of the entire world' (*orbis terrarum lumen*) (l. xxii).⁶⁸ The theme is connected with the recurrent image of the 'Duce' as the 'bringer of

⁶⁵ For example, Luigi Illuminati, who wrote Latin poetry during the *ventennio*, has Mussolini himself utter the phrase. In his triptych of poems entitled *Dux* (1929), the 'Duce' incites his followers to the March on Rome: 'Dux: "Eia – clamat – Fortia, milites, / Romana virtus est facere et pati: / vos iussit haec vicisse bellum, / praemia parta iubet tueri" ...' ('The Leader calls: "Eia! Soldiers! To act and to suffer bravely is the Roman virtue: this virtue ordered you to win the war, and it orders you now to protect the rewards which grew from it ..."') (Illuminati 1932: 6). On this and other Fascist uses of this phrase, see Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016: 225, with n. 39).

⁶⁶ This aspect of Italian Fascism is generally known as the 'sacralization of politics'. Emilio Gentile in particular has argued that this sacralization helped the Fascists to create and promote a new consciousness that filled the void left by the decline of traditional religion and in some ways replaced it: Gentile (1993, 1996, 2001). Eatwell (2003: esp. 155–62) offers a critical evaluation of this approach and stresses the 'rational' appeals of Fascism.

⁶⁷ Ziolkowski and Putnam (2008: 491).

⁶⁸ This specific formulation is reminiscent of Cicero's fourth Catilinarian (*Cat.* 4.11): 'Haec urbs lux orbis terrarum.' For the conceptual difference between Rome as *lux* (as in Cicero) and as *lumen* (as in the *Codex*), see **orbis terrarum lumen* (p. 106).

light'.⁶⁹ Such light metaphors serve to suggest the substitution of the Christian messiah by his earthly, Fascist counterpart: the 'Duce' assumes the role of Christ as the modern 'light of the world' (the *lumen ad revelationem gentium*, Luke 2.32, or *lux mundi*, John 8.12), while Fascism takes the place of Christianity as the illuminating force in the world.⁷⁰

Given the numerous parallels that Amatucci suggests between Mussolini and Augustus, we might also expect the *Codex* to bear similarities to another ancient text which praises a powerful ruler in a monumental setting: the ancient *Res gestae divi Augusti* (*The Deeds of the Divine Augustus*). This huge Latin inscription was set up next to the Mausoleum of Augustus in Rome after the death of Rome's first emperor in AD 14, and its text was later copied in many other locations all over the Roman empire and even translated into Greek. Peter Aicher has, in fact, argued that the *Codex* directly evokes the *Res gestae*.⁷¹ But the *Codex* differs from Augustus' autobiographical text in a number of important ways. In the *Res gestae*, Augustus offers a first-person record of his own achievements, while in the *Codex*, Mussolini's deeds are praised by a third-person narrator. The *Res gestae* are written in plain and paratactic language, in stark contrast to the literary flourishes of the *Codex*. The communicative ambitions of both works are radically different: while the parchment *Codex* forms the nucleus of an invisible deposit, the *Res gestae* were prominently displayed to the public in Rome (and later all over the empire). Furthermore, while Amatucci cites directly the works of a number of famous ancient authors, such as Cicero and Livy, he does not incorporate a single specific reference to the *Res gestae* into the *Codex*. In our view, all this makes it unlikely that the *Codex* is supposed to evoke the *Res gestae* or that they served as a significant literary model for Amatucci.

⁶⁹ For example, Amatucci asserted that the 'Duce' had arranged for the Italian youth to be educated 'in a new light' (*in nova luce*): a phrase that combines the ideas of renewal and of 'enlightenment', both brought about by Mussolini's intervention (see *Codex*, I. lvii).

⁷⁰ On Mussolini's representation as a messiah-like figure, especially in the context of the Fascist youth organization, see also **quodam nutu atque numine* (p. 105).

⁷¹ Aicher (2000: 130).

6. The *Codex* and the Foro Mussolini

The title of the *Codex Fori Mussolini* points to the close relationship between the text itself and the physical context in which it was deposited. The Foro Mussolini was in itself a huge architectural statement of Fascist ideals, a complex of buildings and artworks that conveyed associations of power, youth, *romanità* and imperialism. The *Codex* functions within this architectural programme, and it adds to it by shaping the prospective memory of the complex for future readers.

History of the Foro Mussolini

As the first president of the Fascist youth organization Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB), Renato Ricci (1896–1956) embarked on a large-scale building programme, including the construction of ONB sports facilities across the country (the so-called ‘Case Balilla’) and one especially large prestige project in Rome: a ‘Foro dello Sport’.⁷² First plans were presented by the architect Enrico Del Debbio (1891–1973) in 1927, which already included several of the Foro’s future signature buildings to be realized within the following years: the Fascist Academy for Physical Education (Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica, a complex dedicated to the training of sports teachers) and a larger and a smaller stadium. The latter (known as the Stadio dei Marmi) was decorated with sixty large marble statues in a classicizing style, depicting young men in the pursuit of both traditional and modern sports disciplines (including boxing, skiing and shooting) (*Fig. 6.1*).

In the following years, the plans for the Foro were adapted and expanded multiple times. Concurrently, the function of the space expanded: from large-scale sports and education facilities, the complex developed into a key space of Fascist political representation. Architectural elements such as the monumental entrance area, which included the obelisk and a broad avenue paved with

⁷² On the Foro Mussolini complex see e.g. Painter (2005: 40–9), Kallis (2014: 163–70), Caporilli and Simeoni (1990).

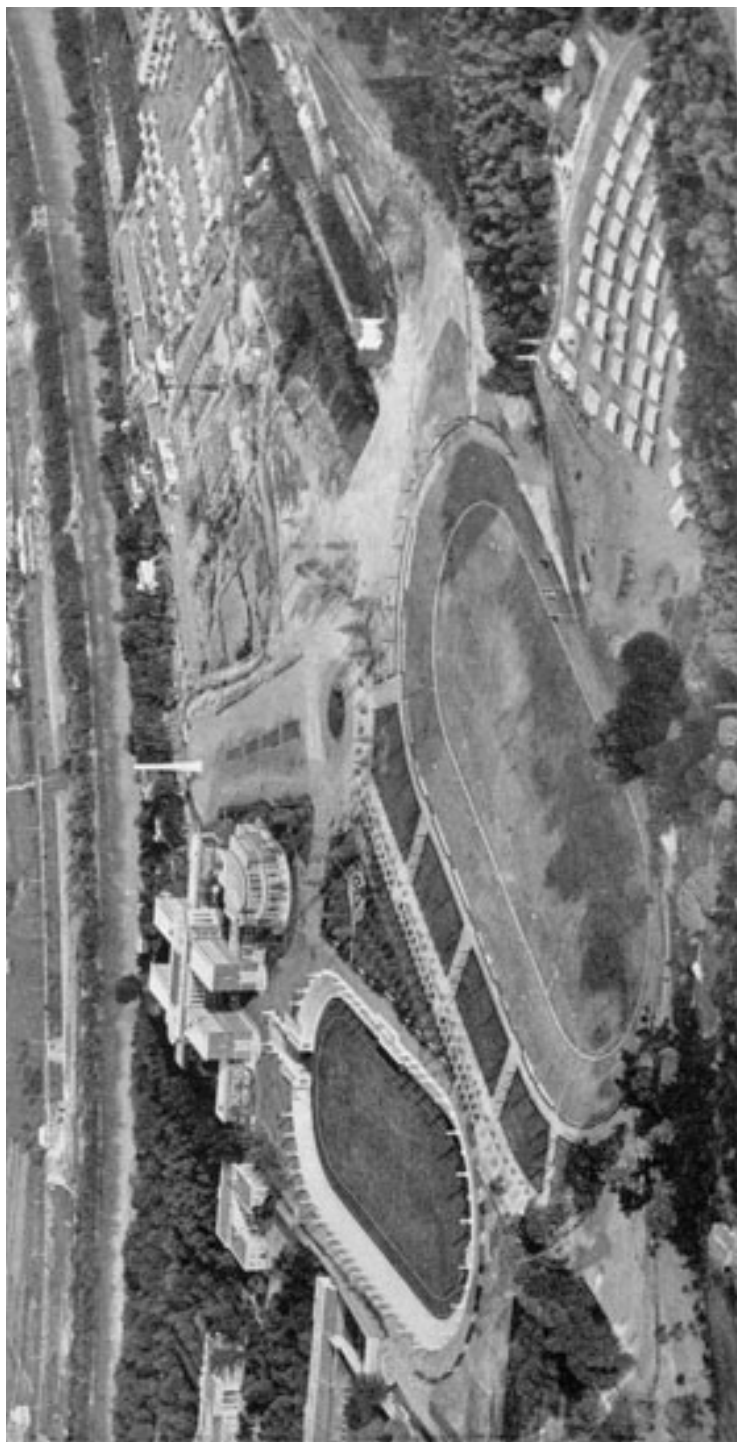


Fig. 6.1 The Foro Mussolini, c. 1932, with the Stadio dei Marmi (left) and the Stadio dei Cipressi (right).

mosaics and lined with marble slabs detailing the history of Fascist Italy (the Forum Imperii), framed the Foro as an arena of Fascist representation. The official name of the complex changed accordingly, from 'Foro dello Sport' in 1927 to 'Foro Sportivo Mussolini' in 1930, and finally to 'Foro Mussolini' in 1932, the name reflecting the increasing subordination of the Foro's athletic function to its political-representative one.⁷³

Although many of the most grandiose plans conceived in the late 1930s were never realized (Figs. 6.2 and 6.3), the Foro has been in continuous use since the *ventennio*, and its largest stadium (inaugurated in 1932 as the Stadio dei Cipressi and rebuilt several times, including for the Olympics in 1960) today hosts the home games of the football clubs A.S. Roma and S.S. Lazio. After the fall of the Fascist regime, the complex was renamed yet again and is now known as the Foro Italico (Fig. 6.4 and Table 1).

The location of the Foro Mussolini

The location of the Foro Mussolini, to the north of the historic centre of Rome, was primarily a practical choice.⁷⁴ The marshy area between the Tiber and the Monte Mario offered ample space for large-scale sports facilities and future extensions. However, the choice of location was not framed as merely practical but as especially meaningful and auspicious. In *Il Foro Mussolini*, Ricci described the area as 'extremely filthy . . . , almost a swamp, but with a rich history and future'.⁷⁵ Even if the Foro was situated outside the historic centre of Rome, Renato Ricci and the Construction Office of the Opera Balilla still attempted, often rather fancifully, to establish the historical importance of the site and especially its significance during Roman antiquity. They pointed to the proximity of the Milvian Bridge, site of the famous battle between Constantine and Maxentius in AD 312 (Fig. 6.5), and the location of the Foro between three

⁷³ Kallis (2014: 167). In the preface to a lavishly illustrated volume entitled *Il Foro Mussolini*, edited in 1937 by the Presidenza Centrale dell'Opera Nazionale Balilla, Ricci describes this process as a 'spiritual evolution' as well as an architectural one (ONB 1937: 6). Later on, it is compared to the growth of a natural organism (ONB 1937: 15).

⁷⁴ On alternative locations that were considered at one point, see Painter (2005: 40) and D'Amelio (2009: 11).

⁷⁵ ONB (1937: 5): 'una zona quanto mai squallida e quasi palustre, ma pure ricca di storia e di avvenire'.



Fig. 6.2 Urban development plan for the Foro Mussolini (1932).



Fig. 6.3 Urban development plan for the Foro Mussolini (1933).



Fig. 6.4 The Foro Italico after 1987 (see *Table 1*, p. 34).

Table 1

Year of completion	Building (Original Function)	Current Function	Map (Fig. 6.4) No.
1927	Fascist Academy of Physical Education ('Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica') (1: gymnasium)	1. Gymnasium of the Università degli Studi di Roma 'Foro Italico' 2. Seat of the Italian National Olympic Committee	1–2
1928	Stadium of the Marble Statues ('Stadio dei Marmi')	=	3
1932	Obelisk	=	4
1932	Stadium of the Cypresses ('Stadio dei Cipressi')	Olympic Stadium	5
1934	Fountain of the Sphere ('La Fontana della Sfera')	=	6
1936	Ponte Duca d'Aosta	=	7
1937	Accademy of Music ('Accademia di Musica')	Auditorium of RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana), Italy's national public broadcasting company	8
1937	Palazzo delle Terme	Università degli Studi di Roma 'Foro Italico'	9
1937	Forum Imperii/Piazzale dell'Impero	=	10

ancient Roman roads: the Via Cassia, the Via Flaminia and the Via Triumphalis (the last branched off from the Via Cassia and marked the route by which triumphing generals entered the city in antiquity). More imaginatively, the authors of *Il Foro Mussolini* also discuss at length the proximity of the area to such entirely hypothetical sites as the villa of the Roman poet Ovid and the camp of Hannibal, the Punic general (Fig. 6.6).⁷⁶

Claims about the site's alleged historical significance were not restricted to antiquity. The authors of *Il Foro Mussolini* also stress the continued importance of the area in the Middle Ages as a corridor of access to the city for visitors and tradespeople. Finally, they claim that the area 'rose again to truly imperial

⁷⁶ ONB (1937: 21–5).

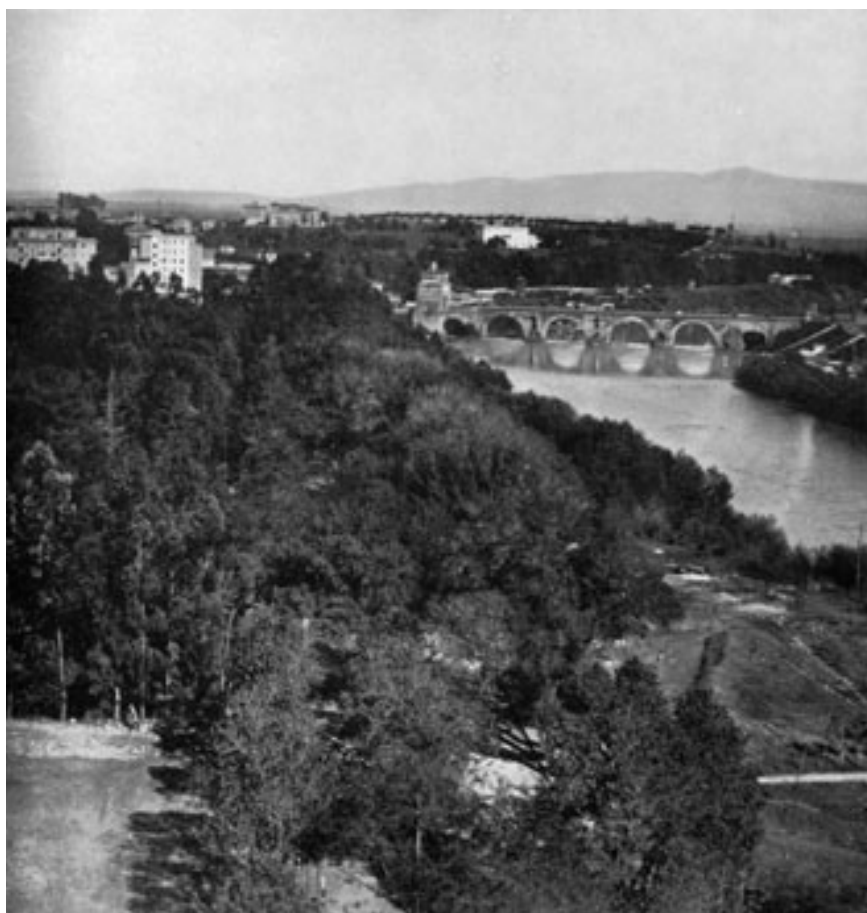


Fig. 6.5 The future site of the Foro Mussolini, with the Milvian bridge in the distance.

splendour' during the High Renaissance, when, just to the south of the Foro area, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (1478–1534, the future Pope Clement VII) began the construction of a splendid, though never completed, suburban villa estate, today known as the Villa Madama.⁷⁷ After the area and the Villa Madama were abandoned, the close proximity to the river quickly turned the area into malaria-infested, uninhabitable marshland. In order to build at the site of the Foro Italico, the ground first had to be raised by four metres and the excess water drained.⁷⁸ These very costly but successful operations were presented as the 'reconquest of a part of the fatherland'.⁷⁹

Models for the Foro Mussolini

The Foro Mussolini evoked and combined multiple ancient models and quite distinct spheres of Roman architecture. The very appellation 'Foro Mussolini' links the modern complex to Roman antiquity. More specifically, the name evoked a number of recent excavations in the centre of Rome. At the time of the erection of the obelisk, classical archaeologists had recently uncovered the ruins of the so-called 'imperial fora': a connected zone of large architectural complexes from the first centuries BC and AD, consisting of temples, open spaces and basilicae, built by some of the most famous Roman emperors. In order to 'free' the remains of the imperial fora, Mussolini had an entire medieval quarter of the city, which had grown over them since antiquity, demolished (Fig. 6.7). A wide road, the Via dell'Impero, was then constructed across the fora from the Colosseum to the Piazza Venezia, allowing those passing or

⁷⁷ ONB (1937: 24): 'Durante il pieno Rinascimento, la zona risorge a splendore veramente imperiale, specialmente per la villa medicea, alta dimora che il Cardinale Giulio de' Medici, desideroso di superare in bellezza, in potenza e in vastità, la villa tiburtina d'Adriano imperatore, fece iniziare, per Leone X, sulle dilette pendici del Monte Mario, da Raffaello, da Giovanni Battista e Antonio da Sangallo e da Giulio Romano.'

⁷⁸ Comparable operations of drainage and land reclamation were carried out in the Pontine Marshes on a much larger scale, leading to the foundation of five new cities: Littoria (1932, now Latina), Sabaudia (1934), Pontinia (1935), Aprilia (1937) and Pomezia (1939). See *Codex*, ll. xlv–xlvii, and '*loci diu inculti . . . salubria fierent*' (p. 110).

⁷⁹ ONB (1937: 26): 'la sistemazione . . . à pure il senso della riconquista di un lembo di patria.' Baxa (2010: 118) also argues that the Foro's 'location was close to the Ponte Milvio and the Porta del Popolo, where the Fascist squads had entered the city in 1922', a connection not made in *Il Foro Mussolini*. The distance between the Porta del Popolo and the Foro Italico is 2.7 kilometres as the crow flies.



Fig. 6.7 Construction work for the Via dell'Impero as seen from the Colosseum.

driving along this road to view, from above, the remains of the fora of Caesar, Augustus, Vespasian (the *Templum Pacis*), Nerva and Trajan (Figs. 6.8, 6.9).⁸⁰

The name 'Foro Mussolini' suggests that the sports complex imitates the Forum Caesaris, the Forum Augusti, the Forum Nervae and the Forum Traiani, even though in terms of appearance or usage it had, in fact, very little in common with any of them. The ancient imperial fora were places of commerce, legal proceedings and religious worship. None of these functions were to be found at Mussolini's forum. Conversely, ancient fora had no athletic functions. The only link between the ancient fora and their modern counterpart is that both served as spaces of political representation. The imperial fora were adorned with emperors' images and complex iconographical programmes regarding their reign and achievements. As Amatuucci was composing the *Codex* in 1932, the function of the Foro Mussolini, too, was shifting towards political representation. In particular, the Forum Imperii (completed 1937, no. 10 in Fig. 6.4) with its detailed mosaics depicting Fascism's and Mussolini's achievements recalls the visual programmes of imperial Rome.⁸¹ It appears that the regime also suggested continuity between the ancient imperial fora and the Foro Mussolini through the scheduling of two events related to the *Decennale*. The opening of the Via dell'Impero was impressively celebrated on 28 October 1932, while the Foro Mussolini was inaugurated only one week later (on 4 November 1932).

For the Foro's function other ancient models seemed more pertinent. As an open space for the pursuit of sport and games the Foro was linked to the ancient Campus Martius, the Field of Mars. The ancient Campus Martius was also an open, low-lying area next to the Tiber, on the opposite bank of the river to the Foro Mussolini and further south. Until late antiquity, the Campus Martius was a non-residential area, home to some of the most famous monuments of ancient Rome, such as the Theatre of Pompey, the Pantheon and Nero's Baths. It was also the site of athletic competitions among the Roman youth. The Greek geographer Strabo writes about the Campus Martius:

⁸⁰ On the Fascist exploration of the imperial fora and the construction of the new Via dell'Impero across them, see the individual chapters in Cardilli (1995). For accessible overviews, see Schieder (2006: 717–20), or Painter (2005: 22–5), and the photographic documentation by the Istituto Luce in Insolera (2001: 132–59).

⁸¹ See e.g. Painter (2005: 42–3), Kallis (2014: 167–8), Estermann-Juchler (1982: 176–7).

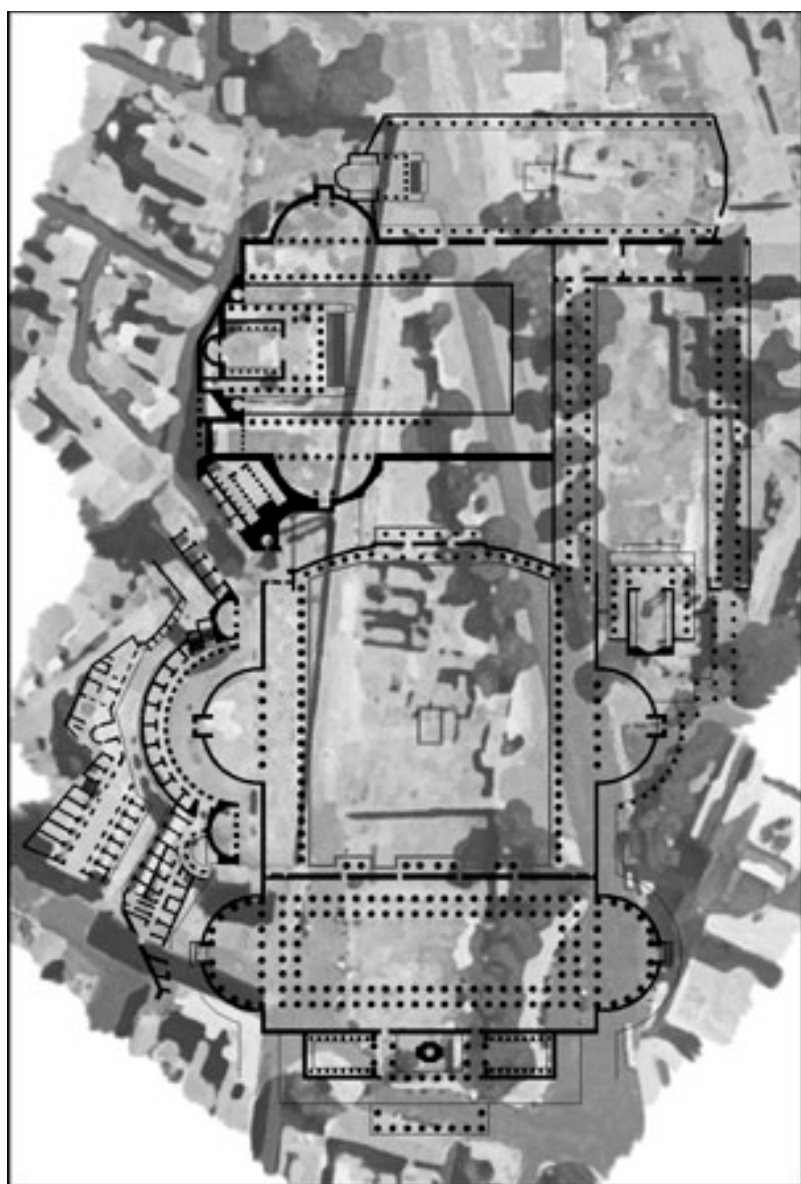


Fig. 6.8 Map of the Fori Imperiali, crossed by the Via dell'Impero.

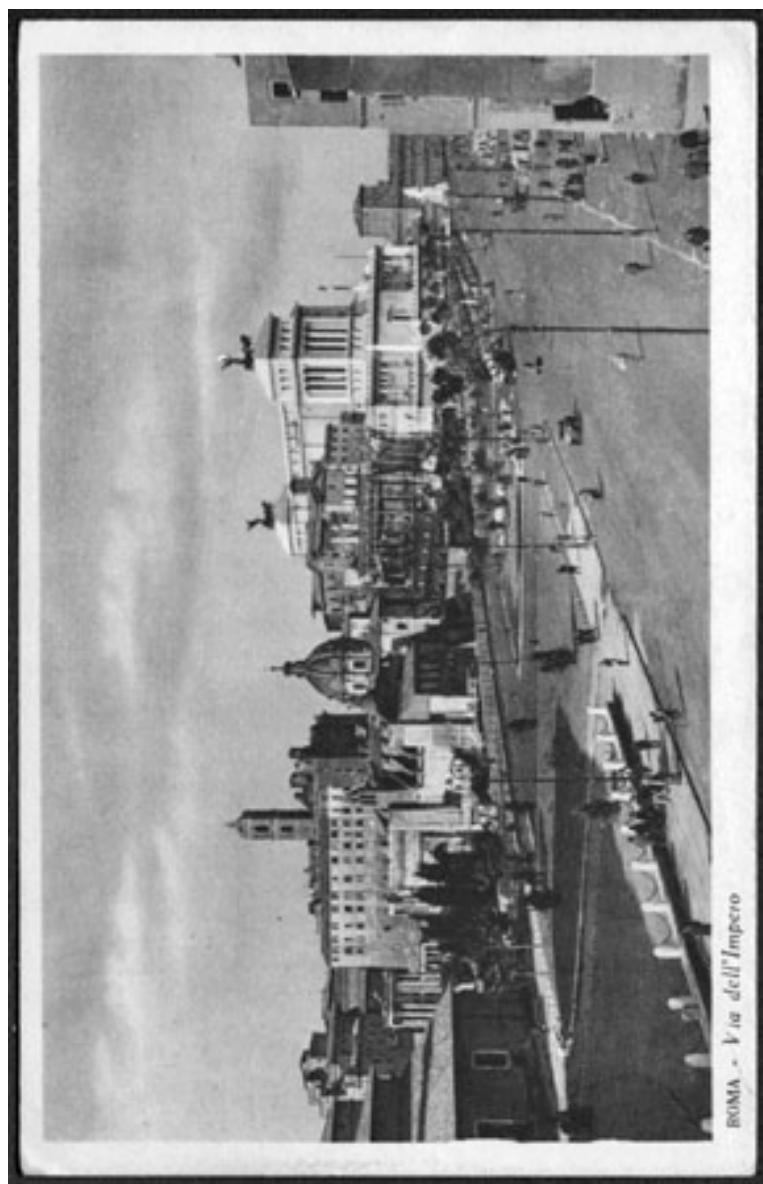


Fig. 6.9 Postcard of the Via dell'Impero (1940).

Indeed, the size of the plain is remarkable, since it affords space at the same time and without interference, not only for the chariot-races and every other equestrian exercise, but also for all that multitude of people who exercise themselves by ball-playing, hoop-trundling, and wrestling.⁸²

In *Capitolium*, the monthly publication of the city government of Rome, the athletic competitions held at the Foro Mussolini were explicitly linked to the Roman games for young men in the Campus Martius:

Rome, which in antiquity had seen the young men of all social classes test their limbs with the martial games of the Campus Martius, Rome, seat of all the institutions proposed for the new organization of the Fascist Academy of Physical Education at the Central Military School of Physical Education, understood suddenly that it must not only follow the new movement, but, if possible, put itself at its head.⁸³

The ancient Roman structures that were in fact most comparable to the Foro Mussolini were the large imperial bath complexes, as the authors of *Il Foro Mussolini* themselves stress:

The [Roman] baths, too [i.e. like the Foro Mussolini], are meant to accommodate awe-inspiring numbers of people. There, too, – next to the swimming pools, the gyms, the stadium – there are public libraries, philosophers' lecture halls, lobbies, schools, meeting halls; there, too, athletic education matches the noblest disciplines of the mind, according to the golden custom of antiquity.⁸⁴

The builders of the Foro Mussolini did not only look to Roman antiquity for their models. The proximity of the Foro to the site of the sixteenth-century

⁸² Strabo 5.3.8: καὶ γὰρ τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ πεδίου θαυμαστὸν ἅμα καὶ τὰς ἀρματοδρομίας καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἵππασίαν ἀκώλυτον παρέχον τῷ τοσούτῳ πλήθει τῶν σφαίρα καὶ κρίκῳ καὶ παλαίστρῳ γυμναζομένων. English translation: Jones (1923).

⁸³ Del Debbio and Gelpi (1930: 395): 'Roma che nell'antichità aveva veduto i giovani di tutte le classi sociali temprare le membra con i marziali ludi del Campo di Marte, Roma sede di tutte le istituzioni proposte alla nuova organizzazione dall'Accademia Fascista Educazione Fisica alla Scuola Centrale Militare di Educazione Fisica, comprese subito che doveva non solo seguire il nuovo movimento, ma, possibilmente, mettersi alla sua testa.'

⁸⁴ ONB (1937: 16): 'La destinazione e i caratteri funzionali delle terme romane hanno in effetto qualche analogia con i caratteri intrinseci dell'organismo nuovissimo: anche le terme sono destinate a ospitare masse imponenti, anche là – accanto alle piscine, alle palestre, allo stadio – sono le biblioteche pubbliche, le esedre dei filosofi, le sale di ritrovo, le scuole, le aule per i raduni; anche là l'educazione atletica si accorda alle più nobili discipline della mente, secondo l'uso aureo della classicità.'

Villa Madama allowed them also to connect their project with another period of perceived Italian cultural dominance in the western world: the Renaissance. In *Il Foro Mussolini*, the authors suggest that the Foro, built at the site of the unfinished villa estate, constitutes a renewal and completion of the Renaissance architects' grand ambitions:

The genius of the newest Italy restores the splendour of a beautiful order right here, on this 'wide expanse of meadows,' where the Renaissance had dreamt in vain of creating one of its purest and most sublime marvels.⁸⁵

Several of the villa's planned features are reprised in the projects planned for the parks surrounding the Foro Mussolini, such as an amphitheatre and a hippodrome (Fig. 6.10).⁸⁶ Many of the photographs in *Il Foro Mussolini* depict vistas of the Foro as seen from or with the Villa Madama, visually connecting the two monuments. This creative and eclectic combination of a variety of ancient and Renaissance elements for the creation of a new whole is a distinguishing feature not only of the Foro but also of the obelisk and of the *Codex* itself, as will be argued more fully in sections 7 and 8.

The ONB and the Foro Mussolini

The *Codex* devotes a section of considerable length to the Opera Nazionale Balilla, its aims and its activities (ll. lvii–lxxxii). The ONB started out as the youth organization of the Fascist National Party (Partito Nazionale Fascista) and was transferred to the authority of the Ministry of Education in 1926, when Ricci was promoted to its presidency. The objectives of the ONB were to educate the Fascists of the future through a regime of physical exercise and 'spiritual' education, designed to instil Fascist values and undivided loyalty to the Duce.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ ONB (1937: 26): 'Il genio di Italia novissima riconduce lo splendore di un ordine di bellezza proprio qui, su questa ampia "largura di prati" ove il Rinascimento aveva sognato invano di creare una delle sue meraviglie più pure e più alte.' The unusual phrase 'largura di prati' was directly taken from Giorgio Vasari's discussion of the Villa Madama in the life of Giulio Romano (only in the second edition of 1568, for which see Vasari 1984: 57, l. 18).

⁸⁶ Cf. ONB (1937: 26): 'un ampio ippodromo concepito "romano ritu" con le due alte mete e un nobile recinto murario.' It is an irony of history that neither project was to be executed at the Foro Mussolini either.

⁸⁷ On the official purpose of the ONB, see the law of 3 April 1926, no. 2247, published in *GURI* (11 January 1927), 86–8. On the ideal of the 'new Italian' and the Opera Nazionale with particular



Fig. 6.10 Reconstruction of planned expansions of the Villa Madama.

The ONB operated nationwide and even had branches in the Italian colonies. Its modernist buildings (the Case Balilla) were rising in cities throughout Italy, but Ricci wanted more: with the Foro Mussolini, he aimed to create a monumental spiritual centre for the ONB's activities. In his preface to *Il Foro Mussolini*, Ricci stressed that the Foro Mussolini would

form in a patriotic and unitary, that is Fascist, sense the youngest strata of a people who, through 1,500 years of foreign domination and in the first period of their very short experience as a nation state, have acquired ideas and mentalities that are so different from those affirmed by the Revolution of the Blackshirts.⁸⁸

The Fascist Academy of Physical Education, which initially started as a training school for future physical education teachers, quickly developed into an academy of future ONB leaders.⁸⁹ Sports facilities such as the stadia and the swimming pools were used for their training but also for large-scale exercises, rallies and competitions. From all over Italy, young members of the ONB travelled to Rome for sports events held at the Foro Mussolini.⁹⁰

In constructing this monumental space of athletics and education, Ricci was also monumentalizing his own achievement as the president of the hugely successful ONB. Shifting the Foro's function from the purely athletic and educational to include more general forms of political representation also served to bolster the ONB's central position within the Fascist regime. Ricci was attempting to unite in one complex the 'headquarters' of the ONB with the political heart of Fascist Rome. As Amatucci phrases it in the *Codex*:

Renato Ricci ... realized that a complex of buildings had to be constructed at Rome, which would both be useful for the execution of such a prudent plan [the education of the youth] and, most importantly, commit to posterity the marvelous deeds of the LEADER.⁹¹

attention to the role of Renato Ricci, see Setta (1986: 113–49). On the role of the ONB in Fascist education in general, see Betti (1984). An illuminating comparative study of the ONB and the Hitlerjugend is Schleimer (2004).

⁸⁸ ONB (1937: 5): '... formare in senso patriottico e unitario, cioè fascista, le classi più giovani di un popolo, che, in quindici secoli di dominazione straniera e nel primo periodo della sua brevissima esperienza di stato nazionale, aveva acquisito idee e mentalità assai difformi da quelle affermate dalla Rivoluzione delle Camicie Nere.'

⁸⁹ Caporilli and Simeoni (1990: 69–83).

⁹⁰ See further **sollemnibus certaminibus* (p. 114).

⁹¹ *Codex*, ll. lxxxiii–lxxxvi.

The *Codex* and the future of the Foro Mussolini

In the introduction he contributed to *Il Foro Mussolini*, Ricci envisages the Foro Mussolini as 'a monument that, linking itself to the Roman imperial tradition, wants to perpetuate for the centuries the memory of the new Fascist civilization, tying it to the name of its Leader'.⁹² It was not only meant as a useful space for the ONB, but also as a legacy of Fascism for future generations. Ricci hoped and expected that 'for centuries', the Foro would continue to exist and to impact the future memory of Fascism. And yet, the very existence of the *Codex* under the obelisk shows that, implicitly at least, a time was envisioned when the Foro would disappear and perhaps even be forgotten. At the time of the text's rediscovery, the Foro might be very much altered, lie in ruins or have disappeared under the ground altogether, just like the ancient Roman ruins that the archaeologists of Fascist Italy were uncovering everywhere in Rome and Italy.

There may be a parallel here with the *Ruinenwert* ('value of ruins') theory of the German Fascist architect Albert Speer (1905–1981). In his 1969 autobiography *Erinnerungen* (*Memories*), Speer claimed that Hitler had encouraged him to construct buildings that would look impressive even in ruins and inspire awe in viewers thousands of years later, just as Greek or Roman ruins still could.⁹³ As a result, Speer claims, he paid special attention to the selection of his building materials, preferring large stone blocks to more modern materials such as poured concrete, glass or metal.⁹⁴ The case of the *Codex* offers an interesting parallel. Ricci and Amatucci, too, seem to have imagined that the Foro could turn into a ruin or disappear in the future. But unlike Albert Speer they did not trust the material remains alone to tell the story of Fascism and inspire awe in future viewers. To control the impression produced by the remains and to construct the prospective memory of Fascism more precisely, they turned to the written word. In the case of a potential rediscovery in a remote future, the *Codex* could help future viewers to make

⁹² Ricci in ONB (1937: 5): 'un monumento che riallacciandosi alla tradizione imperiale romana, vuole eternare nei secoli il ricordo della nuova civiltà fascista, legandola al nome del suo Condottiero.'

⁹³ Speer (1969: 68–9).

⁹⁴ There is, however, no conclusive evidence for existence of the concept at the time of National Socialism. Schönberger (1987) argues that Speer's choices of material were in fact motivated by the need to save on steel in construction and stresses that Speer's (much later) autobiography is our only source for the existence of these ideas under National Socialism.

sense of the remains and to interpret them in the desired fashion. For example, the *Codex* contains the following passage:

There is a most pleasant space between the Monte Mario and the Tiber. There two stadia were built and prepared for use, one distinguished because of its size, the other because of the splendour of marble statues; furthermore wrestling schools, swimming pools, horse racing tracks, lecture halls, libraries, theatres, groves, gardens, walks, where the minds were to be developed through the pursuit of learning and scholarship, the bodies with unremitting exercises, where the spirits were to be refreshed with different kinds of delights, and annual competitions were to be held.⁹⁵

With such descriptions, the *Codex* might be able to help future archaeologists interpret the remains they would be uncovering. In order to achieve this effect, Amatucci also includes in this list of buildings some projects that had not even been begun, let alone completed, in 1932, but which he assumed would be built in the years to come. For example, the indoor *piscinae* ('swimming pools') which he mentions were only completed in 1937, five years after the deposit was placed under the obelisk, while the outdoor pools were never realized during the *ventennio fascista*. Confronted with evolving architectural plans, Amatucci had to combine guesswork with suggestive vagueness to convey to future readers the type of area and buildings that they were to imagine, forging the prospective memory of the Foro Mussolini as Fascism's most complete architectural expression.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ *Codex*, ll. lxxxvii–xciii.

⁹⁶ A parallel for this is the mosaic panel in the Forum Imperii which shows a map of the Foro-complex including the 'piazza delle Adunate' with a bronze colossus of the Duce, never completed. See D'Amelio (2009: 26).

7. The *Codex* under the obelisk

Though itself invisible to contemporaries, the *Codex* is situated in the most visible and most highly marked location of the entire Foro Mussolini. Anyone approaching the Foro from the direction of the city centre and crossing the Tiber on the Ponte Duca D'Aosta (inaugurated in 1942, see no. 7 on Fig. 6.4), would see the white obelisk rising from afar. The *monolite*, as it was frequently called in contemporary publications, formed the centrepiece of the monumental entrance area of the Foro Mussolini (Fig. 7.1). For a visitor leaving the Foro in the direction of the city, the obelisk loomed as the endpoint of the monumental central alley known as the Piazzale dell'Impero (inaugurated in 1937, see p. 39 above and Fig. 7.2).

The *monolite* in the obelisk tradition

The *monolite* itself was designed as a concentrated architectural statement of Fascism's power and that of its leader.⁹⁷ Obelisks had been potent symbols of imperial power for millennia. The first obelisks were erected in Egypt, in a tradition reaching from the Middle Kingdom (c. 2040–1640 BC) down to the Ptolemaic kings and queens (304–30 BC). Augustus (31 BC–AD 14) was the first Roman emperor to transport two Egyptian obelisks to Rome, initiating a tradition of imperial import of obelisks which lasted far into late antiquity and resulted in almost fifty Egyptian obelisks being transported to Rome alone. During the Renaissance, popes and rulers 'rediscovered' such imported obelisks, and moved, re-erected and rededicated them, now under Christian auspices. (Re-)erecting an obelisk had therefore long become a means of placing oneself in an illustrious tradition which reached back through the ages and transcended continents.⁹⁸ The obelisk's peculiar symbolism of power and rule was not lost on the Italian Fascists or on Benito Mussolini.⁹⁹ The obelisk of the Foro Italico

⁹⁷ See e.g. Caffarelli (1938) for a contemporary interpretation.

⁹⁸ On the obelisks of Rome and their histories, see Iversen (1968) and D'Onofrio (1992). On the history of obelisks from antiquity to today and their evolving significance, see also Curran *et al.* (2009).

⁹⁹ On the connection of Mussolini's obelisks (including the Foro Mussolini obelisk and the Axum stele) with Roman, especially Augustan, displays of power, see Wilkins (2005: 61–2).



Fig. 7.1 The *monolite*.



Fig. 7.2 Model showing the obelisk as the endpoint of the Piazzale dell’Impero.

was intended to emulate and to outdo those already erected in Rome and to place Mussolini and the Fascist regime in one line with their predecessors.

This history of obelisks in Rome may also have suggested the base of the *monolite* as a practical location for the *Codex*. Removing an obelisk is a huge and difficult undertaking. Safely placed underneath the *monolite*, the *Codex* could be expected to lie undisturbed for hundreds of years, simply because any removal or destruction of the colossal 300-ton monument would be a huge and arduous task: just *how* arduous is shown by an episode of June 1941, when theatrical scholar and director Vito Pandolfi (1917–74), with the help of his friend Paolo Faraggiana, managed to deposit a bomb at the obelisk. Although the bomb exploded as planned, it caused only minimal damage to the monument's base.¹⁰⁰ Despite the difficulties involved, the history of other obelisks in Rome suggested that at certain important points in history, obelisks were moved by those wishing to form part of a tradition of powerful rulers. This combination of safety in the short term and likelihood of discovery in the (very) long term rendered the base of the *monolite* an ideal place for the deposit.

The idea of dedicating an obelisk to the Duce and placing it at the entrance of the complex of the Foro Mussolini was conceived by Renato Ricci, the president of the Opera Nazionale Balilla (see p. 28 above), as part of his ambitious plans for the Foro.¹⁰¹ The obelisk was to be fashioned from white Carrara marble, with its tip covered in gilded bronze.¹⁰² In 1928, the search for a suitably large block of marble, free of imperfections and cracks, began in the quarries of Carrara.¹⁰³ The block that was discovered was then extracted, cut and covered with a protective encasing of wood and iron. Thus prepared for transport, the monolith, weighing almost 300 tons (excluding its heavy cover), began its precarious journey from the quarry in the mountains to the marina of Forte dei Marmi, transported on sleighs and dragged by sixty-six oxen.

¹⁰⁰ Zangrandi (1962: 555).

¹⁰¹ On Ricci, see Setta (1986) and Zanzanini (2004).

¹⁰² Even though Ricci claimed in a letter to Mussolini that the tip had been fashioned of massive gold for the cost of half a million lire, this was in fact untrue: the tip was merely made of cast and gilded bronze: see D'Amelio (2005: 79 with n. 55).

¹⁰³ Ricci himself was a native of Carrara, which depended largely on the quarrying and sale of marble. From 1924 he was first commissary, then president of the Consorzio dei marmi di Carrara. The idea of offering a block of white Apuan marble as a present for the creation of a monument to the Duce is believed to have originated with him. The block of marble declared suitable for the monolith was in fact conveniently 'discovered' in the quarries of Ricci's brother-in-law, Cirillo Figaia (D'Amelio 2009: 32; Benton 2002: 97).

Floating between two pontoons, it was then conveyed to Rome by sea and on the river Tiber, and finally arrived there in June 1929. Three years later, once the design of the monument had been finalized, the block was transported from Farnesina to the site of the Foro. The obelisk now had to be erected. This was a particularly complex process due to the fragility of the material. The erection took place between August and September of 1932. The monument was finally inaugurated in the presence of Ricci and Mussolini on 4 November 1932 as part of the celebration of the *Decennale*, the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome and the establishment of the Fascist regime (Fig. 7.3).

The obelisk as a monument of *romanità*

Despite its position in a long and meaningful tradition, the *monolite* was also a singular monument, designed to perform a particular task within the context of Italian Fascism in general and Renato Ricci's plans for the Foro in particular. Both the physical appearance of the obelisk and its coverage in different contemporary media evoke the millennia-old tradition from which it came only very selectively. As a monument of Italian Fascism, the obelisk was explicitly framed as a *Roman* achievement, as a monument to reborn *romanità* under Fascism. Such monuments' earlier Egyptian heritage, which had formed a crucial part of their impact in Roman antiquity, was now completely excluded.

On the other hand, this Fascist evocation of 'Romanness' consisted not of the faithful copying of Roman precedents but of highly selective citations and combinations of elements from Roman antiquity. This selectivity is apparent in the obelisk's very form as well as its position in the context of the Foro Mussolini. The obelisk was placed in a (neo-)imperial forum which stood in the tradition of the imperial fora excavated in the 1920s (see pp. 37–9 above), although we do not know of a single obelisk in antiquity which stood in an imperial forum. The inscription on the obelisk itself (MVSSOLINI DVX) links it to the monuments of ancient Rome through language and typeface, but yet again, no Roman precedent exists: 'Roman' obelisks were covered in Egyptian hieroglyphs, and even obelisks produced specifically for Roman emperors during the Roman empire were always inscribed in hieroglyphs, never in Latin (although the base might be). Finally, even the material of the obelisk was unparalleled in antiquity. The *monolite* was made of Carrara



Fig. 7.3 Benito Mussolini (left) and Renato Ricci (centre) at the inauguration of the obelisk and the Foro Mussolini.

marble, and not, as its ancient forebears, of Egyptian granite, an innovation that nevertheless suggested strong links to the Roman past, since the Romans had first opened the quarries at Carrara, and this comparatively easy access to white marble had famously allowed for Augustus' transformation of the city of Rome from a city of bricks to one of marble. Carrara marble was an 'Italian' choice which conveyed a sense of *romanità* while dissociating the monolith from the much wider range of cultural presences within the 'Roman' obelisk tradition.¹⁰⁴

The *monolite* was therefore not merely an imitation of ancient Roman obelisks, even if, by its very form and monumental context, it positioned itself in a 'Roman' tradition. It was conceived as a monument which visually merged *romanità* with modernity. Designed by the young architect Costantino Costantini (1904–1982), the *monolite* combines the familiar ancient shape of the obelisk with a dynamic agglomeration of cubi at the base, which almost seem to shift shape under the viewer's gaze. The reduction to square shapes and the pronounced horizontals and verticals bear witness to the influence of constructivism and rationalism, and more traditional designs for the obelisk were rejected.¹⁰⁵

The selective connections between ancient Roman obelisks and the *monolite* were also pointed out at every opportunity in the incessant media coverage. The connection emphasized most strongly was that between Roman and Fascist mastery of the technical challenges and the enormous effort of raising an obelisk. The fantastic story of the obelisk's creation (regarded as its most

¹⁰⁴ The 'Roman' significance of the Carrara marble was spelled out by Ricci himself in a speech before the transportation of the monolith began: 'In the Roman Empire, they erected with our marble superb columns as a sign of the greatness and indestructible pride of our race. Today, we follow inevitably in the footsteps of our proud forebears' ('Nella Roma Imperiale i marmi nostri innalzarono superbe colonne in segno di grandezza e di indistruttibile orgoglio di razza. Oggi, noi, inevitabilmente ricalchiamo le orme dei grandi avi'), cited in Benton (2002: 97). The imperialist claim communicated by the import of foreign, especially north-African, obelisks was also not lost on Mussolini, who had the so-called 'stele of Axum' transported to Rome in 1937 and erected in front of the Ministry of the Colonies in the Piazza di Porta Capena. The stolen monument was only returned to Ethiopia in 2008. See Curran *et al.* (2009: 291–3).

¹⁰⁵ D'Amelio (2009: 32–7); see also Benton (2002: 97) on the blend of antiquity and modernity. The little that we know about the architect Costantino Costantini, not to be confused with an older architect (1854–1937) of the same name, is collected in Farina (2013: 41–80, 135–58). Having been brought to the attention of Renato Ricci, Costantini was commissioned to design several ONB-related buildings, most notably the Casa del Balilla in Turin (1929), which was very well received by critics (Farina 2013: 43–4), as well as many other state projects. After huge initial success, from 1936 onwards, Costantini was mysteriously ignored by critics and journalists and did not obtain further important commissions: Farina (2013: 69), citing Terzano (2007), speculates that an unfortunate incident during the inauguration of the Stadio della Pallacorda at the Foro Mussolini (present-day Stadio Nicola Pietrangeli) might have been behind Costantini's sudden fall from grace.

important asset) was cleverly exploited for propaganda purposes in the Fascist media. Every step of the obelisk's journey and erection was meticulously documented and reported in the national press, in newspapers, weeklies and specialized journals. These publications were often lavishly illustrated with photographs, usually provided by the Istituto Luce (*Figs. 7.4 and 7.5*). Luce also filmed many of the proceedings, using the material for documentaries and newsreels.¹⁰⁶ In the last category a striking twenty-five items on the obelisk alone were produced and presented to the Italian public.¹⁰⁷ Via all these different channels, the long duration, the cost, the technical hazards and difficulties of the project were documented and its execution extolled as an almost superhuman achievement. An article which appeared in 1933 in the architectural design magazine *Casabella* on the subject of the obelisk begins as follows:

When one is admiring, nose in the air, this white block of Carrara marble, which will recall for centuries the name of Mussolini, and if one roughly estimates its dimensions and weights, one cannot avoid one very simple and legitimate question: how was this Cyclopic monolith brought here and raised on its base?¹⁰⁸

In what follows, the author stresses the speed at which the work was executed and devotes much attention to the immense difficulty of the work, describing in detail the design of the lifting mechanism, the dangers and crises of the actual lifting process and the ways in which they were solved. The blow-by-blow account of the final moments of the process, the demolition of the raising apparatus, attempts to recreate the dramatic moments for the readers' imagination (*Fig. 7.6*):

The pier leaned, was on the point of tipping over, leaned; but when one was already expecting the thunder of collapse, the engine made a strange noise,

¹⁰⁶ On the Luce coverage of the obelisk transportation, see Tiberi (2009).

¹⁰⁷ D'Amelio (2009: 10). The DVD appended to D'Amelio (2009) gives a good impression of the material used for the newsreels and documentaries.

¹⁰⁸ 'Quando si sta ad ammirare col naso in aria quel candido blocco di marmo di Carrara che ricorderà nei secoli il nome di Mussolini, e se ne valutano ad occhio le misure e i pesi, non si può evitare una domanda molto semplice e legittima: come fu trasportato fin lassù e innalzato sulla sua base questo ciclopico monolito?' The article, written by the editor, the rationalist architect Giuseppe Pagano (1896–1945), appeared in the first instalment of January 1933 (22–3), and is here quoted from its reproduction in Insolera and Sette (2003: 30–1).

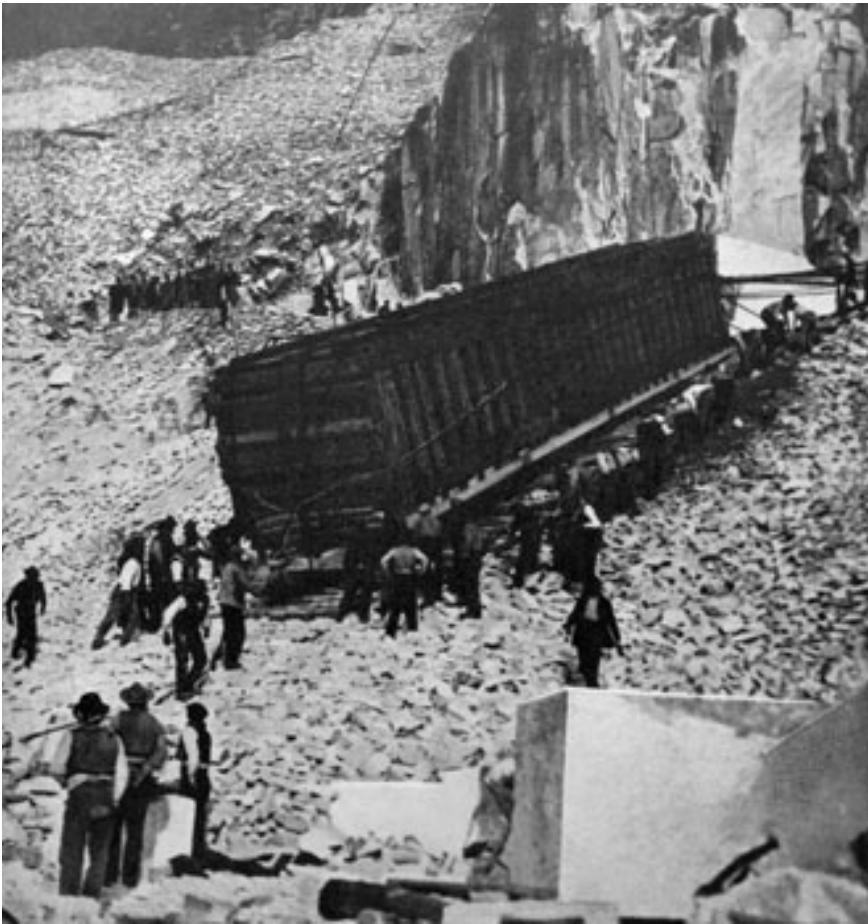


Fig. 7.4 Transportation of the obelisk in the quarries of Carrara.



Fig. 7.5 Erection of the obelisk.

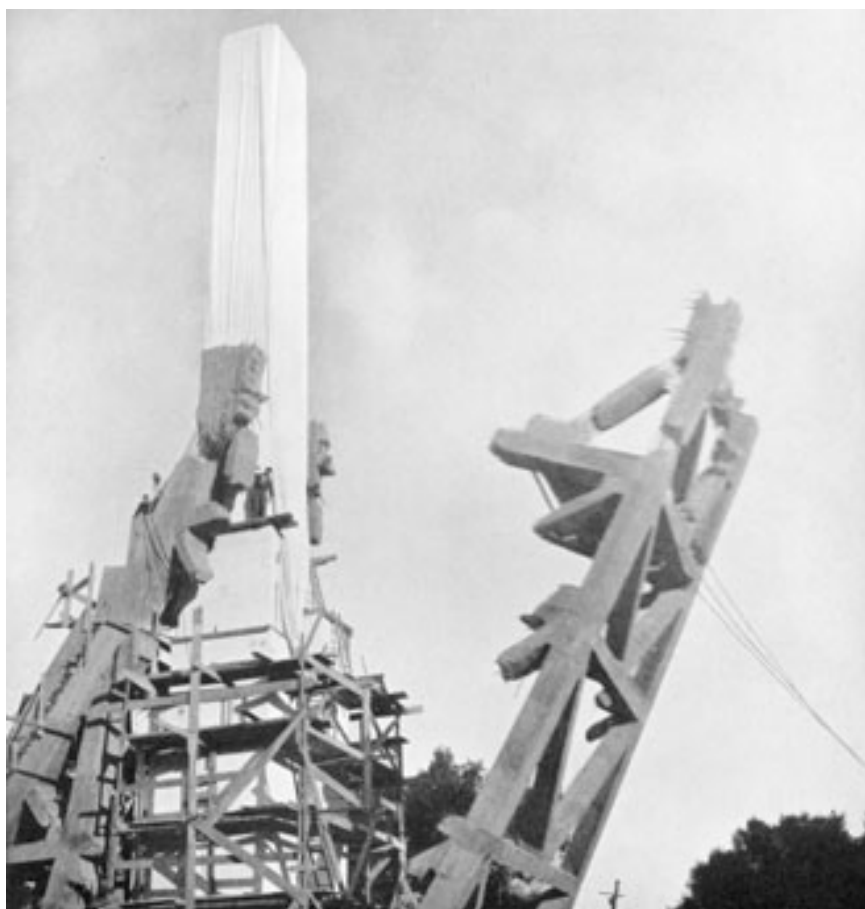


Fig. 7.6 Demolition of the raising apparatus.

and the support swayed worryingly towards the monolith: the ropes held three times.¹⁰⁹

There are numerous similar publications offering spectacular accounts of the raising of the obelisk and interpreting the achievement as an expression of the greatness of Fascism.¹¹⁰

In this focus on the process of transportation and erection, Fascist coverage of the obelisk's story especially stressed the continuity between Roman and Fascist mastery of the effort and technical challenges involved.¹¹¹ For example, the authors of *Il Foro Mussolini* claimed that in transporting the obelisk, 'the Carrarians had in the Fascist era renewed a typically Roman undertaking'.¹¹² The fact that Egyptians had already erected obelisks successfully long before the Romans was conveniently left unmentioned. Instead, tangible connections between the ancient and the Fascist effort were inventively 'discovered': in a Luce newsreel of May 1929, a large square marble block, destined for the podium of the obelisk, was shown from two sides, one of them cut smoothly with modern methods of marble working, one allegedly still showing the incisions of the chisels of ancient Roman workmen.¹¹³ The obelisk was presented to the public as an achievement directly linked to but also surpassing the incredible engineering achievements of the ancient Romans.

Others also pointed to another link in the Roman chain of obelisk erections and another, later model for this technical feat: the re-erection of ancient obelisks during the Renaissance, and more specifically the engineer Domenico Fontana's (1543–1607) spectacular raising of the obelisk in front of St Peter's basilica under Pope Sixtus V (1585–90). The re-erection of this particular obelisk (which had first been brought to Rome by Emperor Claudius) also served as inspiration and model for the Fascist engineers. The two projects were compared in detail in a paper presented by Giuseppe Caffarelli (1890–1983), the National Secretary of the Fascist Syndicate of Engineers in Rome, to

¹⁰⁹ 'La trave . . . si inclina, sta per ribaltarsi, si inclina; ma quando si attende già lo scroscio della caduta, il motore "rata" e la stilata oscilla paurosamente verso il monolito: le funi, per tre volte, resistono.'

¹¹⁰ D'Amelio (2009: 190–1) offers a list of audio-visual sources. Examples of coverage in the press include Maccaroni (1929), Brigante Colonna (1929) and Caffarelli (1938).

¹¹¹ See also Benton (2002: 96–8)

¹¹² ONB (1937: 86): 'L'esperienza fu inventata, l'ingegno e la tenacia ebbero ragione di tutti: i carraresi rinnovarono in tempo fascista l'impresa tipicamente romana.' On Roman techniques of obelisk transportation see Wirsching (2006) and (2010).

¹¹³ D'Amelio (2009: 10, with n. 15). Rome, Archivio Storico dell'Istituto Luce, Giornale Luce, A0346.

the Fourth National Congress of Roman Studies and published in its proceedings.¹¹⁴ The connection between the obelisk at the Foro Mussolini and the Roman obelisk tradition was established very selectively in order to emphasize the 'Romanness' of the monument and to suggest a continuity between the 'Roman' obelisks of antiquity, the Renaissance restoration of these monuments and Mussolini's *monolite*.¹¹⁵

The obelisk and the *Codex*

The raising of the obelisk under which the *Codex* lies forms the climax and conclusion of Amatucci's text. In relation to the text as a whole, the amount of space and detail lavished on the story of the obelisk is striking, and it is treated last.¹¹⁶ The reader is encouraged to see the monument as the pinnacle and culmination of all achievements of Fascism, the Italian people and its leader, surpassing even those of the ancient Romans:

But upon the joy of discovery [i.e. of a suitably large piece of marble in the quarries] followed a new task, because this mass had to be transported from the mountains to the plain and from Carrara to Rome. This indeed no people except the Romans had earlier managed, and how they managed it is not sufficiently clear. But nevertheless the strong talent of our architects, the singular skill of our craftsmen, and the huge love of all for the fatherland and for the LEADER prevailed.¹¹⁷

Amatucci stresses the skill of the architects, the love for the 'Duce' which apparently inspired all those involved to superhuman efforts, and the almost insurmountable difficulty of the task. In accordance with the *monolite*'s 'Italianizing' and purposely un-Egyptian physical appearance, Amatucci, too, forges a direct link between Roman and Italian engineering prowess, making

¹¹⁴ Caffarelli (1928). A biography of Fontana was published by the chief archaeologist of Fascist Rome: Muñoz (1944).

¹¹⁵ Anker (1996: 171) observes that 'the mechanism that lifted [the obelisk] into place was surprisingly reminiscent of the device created by Fontana 350 years earlier' and suggests that Costantini 'intentionally made his machine look more pre-industrial than modern, even following Fontana's lead by using hand-operated winches to raise the obelisk'. In reality, however, Costantini's mechanism, based on a hydraulic lifting device, was completely unlike Fontana's technique of lifting the obelisk with ropes between timber towers (see D'Amelio 2009: 66–83).

¹¹⁶ It receives 24 lines, compared to, for example, two lines spent on the entire building activity of Mussolini and a further two on his excavation of ancient monuments.

¹¹⁷ *Codex*, ll. cii–cvii.

no mention of the Egyptians, who had made and transported obelisks much earlier than the Romans.

The *Codex* thus seems to support the ideological message of the *monolite* as expressed by its appearance and its presentation in contemporary media.¹¹⁸ But the relation between the respective memorial functions of the *Codex* and the monument to which it belongs is complex. An obelisk is a monument which is expected to last. Peoples in all eras have erected such monuments in order to reach out to future viewers, possibly centuries away, and this memorializing function of Mussolini's obelisk plays a key part in its conception and presentation. For example, the letters of the inscription are incised rather than sculpted in relief to prevent their abrasion or removal in the future.¹¹⁹ The *Codex*, too, ends with an affirmation of the eternity of the physical obelisk.¹²⁰

It stands in the very entrance to the *Foro Mussolini* and it will immortalize for eternity the fortunes of the fatherland, restored by the LEADER, the excellent and unconquered spirit of the LEADER regarding the fatherland, the immovable loyalty of the citizens to the LEADER and the outstanding achievements of Fascism.¹²¹

The *monolite* was to serve as a lasting memory of the greatness of Fascism – but there lies a paradox in the text's affirmation of the obelisk's eternity. The very fact of the *Codex* ever being read (in its original version on the buried parchment) requires the monument's removal, relocation or collapse. As discussed on pp. 46–7, Amatucci designed the *Codex* as a document that could outlast its architectural surroundings and convey the splendour of the Foro to future readers who could no longer see it. At a time when Foro and obelisk no longer existed, only the *Codex* itself would still be able to 'immortalize for eternity the outstanding achievements of Fascism'. At the moment of reading, the text's own claims about the eternity of the monolith will be proven false, superseded by the eternity of the text itself.

¹¹⁸ The Renaissance connection stressed by Caffarelli and others (see pp. 59–60), is, however, absent from Amatucci's text.

¹¹⁹ D'Amelio (2009: 36).

¹²⁰ Cf. also Parisotti (1933: 12) for another Latin prose text in which the author claims that the *memoria* of Mussolini would be fittingly transmitted to posterity by the newly erected obelisk.

¹²¹ *Codex*, ll. cxix–cxxi.

8. The *Codex* as a foundation deposit

A foundation deposit is an object placed during the process of building in a henceforth inaccessible location within the construction, for example under a wall, in the foundations or underneath a threshold. In placing a building deposit underneath the monolith, Ricci and the obelisk's architect Costantini were following a well-established tradition. The placement of objects in the foundations of structures is a universal and cross-cultural phenomenon.¹²² The earliest instances of such deposits, found under such different structures as pre-Columbian pyramids and Minoan palaces, reflect a human desire to ensure protection for a building or structure through the sacrifice of valuable items, such as artefacts, animals or even humans. Such deposits were designed to remain in place and protect the built structure.

Besides (or in contrast with) this apotropaic function, foundation deposits could also serve an entirely different purpose. Images or written text (for example in the form of coins or inscriptions) could serve to carry the memory of the builder or the people who produced a structure into the future.¹²³ Such deposits are already attested around 1850 BC in Mesopotamia, where inscribed tablets or cylinders, made of metal or clay, were buried under buildings and fortification walls.¹²⁴ In the case of such deposits, ruin or the renewal of the structure is accepted as a possibility or even certainty, but such a removal has the potential to bring about remembrance and recognition through the rediscovery of the deposit.

Even today, we commonly leave 'messages to the future' in buildings. The tradition of ceremonially placing a cornerstone or *lapis primarius* has a long history. Such stones, often specially sculpted and sometimes visible on the outside or inside walls of buildings, frequently contain so-called 'time-capsules', consisting of objects such as coins, newspapers or other items which, immured in the building, may survive for a long time and be discovered by a future

¹²² See Schraven (2009: 190–3).

¹²³ Green (2000: 122).

¹²⁴ The definitive study of foundation deposits in ancient Mesopotamia is Ellis (1968). Once discovered, they were often re-buried alongside a new inscription reporting the event and the structure's restoration: Green (2000: 122).

generation.¹²⁵ Taking into account this long tradition of deposits and the more recent, widespread custom of placing items and even time capsules in cornerstones, the mere fact that a foundation deposit was placed underneath the Mussolini obelisk is not unusual – but the content of the deposit certainly is.

The content, position and placement of the deposit

Since the deposit proper remains under the obelisk, our evidence for its composition, position and placement derives from the different printed editions of the text as well as contemporary newspaper reports. In edition *S/C* (1933), the text is followed by this subscript:

This parchment codex was composed in Latin by Aurelio Giuseppe Amatucci, painted with miraculous skill by Enrico Brignoli at Rome in the workshop of Nestore Leoni and placed in the base of the monolithic obelisk of the Foro Mussolini on 27 October 1932.¹²⁶

An article in the newspaper *Il Popolo di Roma* of 5 November 1932, entitled ‘The Codex Fori Mussolini Placed in the Base of the Great Monolith’, offers further particulars:

On the occasion of the erection of the Mussolini monolith, the ‘Codice del Foro Mussolini’ was placed in the base of the obelisk, which contains the story of the Opera Balilla in the first years of its life and the events of the construction of the Foro Mussolini.¹²⁷

In *Il Foro Mussolini*, published in 1937 (*F*), the brief introduction to the *Codex* contains another crucial detail:

In the foundations of the Mussolini Obelisk a number of specially minted golden coins and the ‘Codice del Foro Mussolini’ were immured. . . .¹²⁸

On the basis of these texts, we conclude that the deposit under the obelisk contained, apart from the parchment codex, a number of golden

¹²⁵ On time capsules see Jarvis (2003).

¹²⁶ *Codex*, ll. cxxv–cxxiii. Cf. the footnote in Amatucci (1933: 153), cited in n. 44 above.

¹²⁷ *Il popolo di Roma* (1932a: 5): ‘In occasione della erezione del monolite Mussolini, è stato depositato nella base dell’obelisco il Codice del Foro Mussolini, contenente la storia dell’Opera Balilla nei suoi primi anni di vita e le vicende della costruzione del Foro.’

¹²⁸ ONB (1937: 103): ‘Nelle fondazioni dell’Obelisco Mussolini furono murati alcuni aurei appositamente conati e il “Codice del Foro Mussolini”. . . .’

coins, and that it lies not below the ground but enclosed *within* the obelisk's base.

The exact process by which the deposit arrived at its destination can no longer be ascertained. Although almost all aspects of the transportation and erection of the obelisk were covered in the contemporary media, the placement of the deposit seems not to have been celebrated with a special ceremony, and it received little attention in the press.¹²⁹ This is in marked difference to the lavish ceremonies and extensive news coverage which accompanied the inauguration of many other Fascist building projects. At many building sites, a *prima pietra* (first stone) was ceremonially laid in the ground before construction proper began. This *prima pietra* often bore an inscription on the outside and could contain a deposit, normally consisting of a metal tube with a short, written message in remembrance of the event. During the inauguration ceremony, this document was signed by a representative of the state or the church and deposited in an opening carved in the *prima pietra*. The opening was then filled with mortar, after which the foundation stone was lowered into the ground. Mussolini himself repeatedly performed such ceremonies (Fig. 8.1).¹³⁰

The *Codex Fori Mussolini*, however, was placed inside the base of the obelisk at a much later stage, during the last weeks before the inauguration of the monument, and its deposition does not seem to have formed part of a similar ceremony. However, we assume that the *Codex*, too, was placed in such a metal tube, which was then enclosed within a block of stone. Since the stones containing deposits often bore short inscriptions (such as the *fascies* and a date), the smallest of the constituent blocks of the obelisk's base, inscribed on

¹²⁹ See *Il popolo di Roma* (1932a: 5).

¹³⁰ Inauguration ceremonies were often caught on camera for the regime's newsreel 'Giornale Luce' and can be viewed online at <www.archivioluce.com>. On 27 October 1937, for example, 'Giornale Luce' showed Mussolini inaugurating the construction site of office blocks for the 'Esposizione Universale Roma', including the *prima pietra* (which bears the Latin text 'deo iuvante et patria virtute' and a relief of the *fascies*), the parchment document and the metal tube for the deposit. Mussolini is shown signing the document and personally enclosing the metal tube within the *prima pietra* (Giornale Luce B1188, 27/10/1937). See also Giornale Luce B1295 (27/04/1938) (cf. OO 29: 94) (inauguration of Pomezia), Giornale Luce B1199 (11/11/1937) (Istituto Nazionale Luce at Rome), Giornale Luce B1450 (25/01/1939) (cement factories in Guidonia) and Giornale Luce B1530 (14/06/1939) (Istituto Nautico in Castel Fusano). In all these inauguration ceremonies, Mussolini signed the document and sometimes also personally cemented the deposit. Mussolini also performed this ceremony on other occasions, for example at the foundation of Littoria (Pini and Susmel 1955: 254), Sabaudia (Muratore, Carfagna and Tieghi 1999: 108; Iannella 2011: 324), the Casa del Littorio in Postumia (OO 29: 148) and at the coal mines of Istrian Pola (Passerini 1991: 180).



Fig. 8.1 The laying of the foundation stone for the new buildings of the Istituto Luce.

the outside with 'OPERA / BALILLA / ANNO / X', seems a particularly likely candidate – although at present, the exact location of the deposit has to remain a mystery (*Fig. 8.2*).¹³¹

The medals as part of the deposit

In the publications of Amatucci's text, we learn that a number of gold coins were specifically minted for this occasion ('aurei appositamente coniat'). Honorific medals, usually of bronze but sometimes made of gold or gilded, were cast by the hundreds in Fascist Italy.¹³² We have no way of telling which of these were placed in the deposit – with one possible exception. The edition of the newspaper *Il Popolo di Roma*, which contains the report of the deposition of the *Codex* (see p. 63 above), also prints (on the same page) a large image of both sides of an honorific medal, accompanied by the following text:

Large commemorative medal of the inauguration of the Foro Mussolini, offered to the Duce by the honourable Ricci, President of the ONB: minted by the Italian Society for the Art of the Medal, following a model of the sculptor Marescalchi [*sic*].¹³³

The obverse of the pictured medal (*Fig. 8.3*) shows Mussolini in profile, his head covered by a lion skin, while the reverse shows the obelisk and bears the legend 'FORO MVSSOLINI' and 'A. X.' (*anno decimo*, i.e. in the tenth year since the March on Rome). In its design and style, the medal is highly classicizing, in the tradition of ancient coins as well as Renaissance portrait medals.¹³⁴ This

¹³¹ The subscript of *C/S* (see p. 63 and *Codex*, ll. cxxv–cxxxiii) indicates that the *Codex* was deposited on 27 October 1932, i.e. one week before the inauguration of the obelisk at 4 November 1932. At this stage of the construction process, it was obviously impossible to place the deposit *under* the obelisk proper: instead, it must have been deposited within the marble encasing of the base, which was only added after the raising of the monolith.

¹³² Casolari (1996) is a complete catalogue of all medals coined in Fascist Italy (for this medal see Casolari 1996: no. X-31). A large collection of medals coined during the decennial is also assembled on: <numismatica-italiana.lamoneta.it/cat/W-ME61L>.

¹³³ *Il popolo di Roma* (1932b: 5): 'Grande medaglia commemorativa dell'inaugurazione del Foro Mussolini, offerta al Duce dall'on. Ricci, Presidente dell'O.N.B.: coniatà dalla Società Italiana per l'Arte della Medaglia, su modello dello scultore Marescalchi [*sic*].' The artist's name was in fact Morescalchi (see n. 136 below).

¹³⁴ There is also another version of the same motif in a much less classicizing style, executed by a different artist, for which see Casolari (1996: no. X-38) and <numismatica-italiana.lamoneta.it/moneta/W-ME61L/6>. For other medal designs by Morescalchi, see the collection at <numismatica-italiana.lamoneta.it/zecchieri>.



Fig. 8.2 Inscribed block of obelisk base.



Fig. 8.3 Medal showing on one side Mussolini wearing the lion skin and on the other the Mussolini obelisk.

style is typical of the artist, the sculptor and medallist Bernardo Morescalchi (1895–1975).¹³⁵ Like Ricci (whose portrait he sculpted in bronze for the Venice Biennale of 1932) and the Foro's architect Del Debbio, Morescalchi was a native of Carrara, who later became a professor of sculpture in Naples (1935–9). He specialized in large bronze sculpture, but also produced a number of works in marble for the Foro Italico, as well as range of other commissions across Italy.¹³⁶

Through the depiction of Mussolini wearing a lion skin, Morescalchi links the Duce to the ancient mythical hero Hercules, who was usually depicted wearing a lion skin in antiquity in reference to the first of his twelve labours, the killing of the Nemean lion (*Fig. 8.4*). Morescalchi's portrait also specifically recalls a number of ancient coins which show rulers in the guise of Hercules, among them tetradrachms of Alexander the Great and a number of Roman imperial coins (*Fig. 8.5*).

The iconographic link between Hercules and Mussolini on the medal fits into the larger scheme of the Foro Mussolini. For example, Mussolini had a private gym installed on the premises of the Foro, the interior of which was decorated with murals depicting him in the role of Hercules and accomplishing the hero's twelve mythical labours. Another, even more megalomaniac plan never came to fruition: the architect Luigi Moretti (1907–73) envisaged a gigantic bronze colossus of Hercules, twice the height of the Statue of Liberty, with Mussolini's facial features and the lion skin over his head, towering over the entire area (*Fig. 8.6*). After only a few parts, including the head, had been cast, the project was abandoned due to lack of funds after the international trade boycott against Italy in 1936/7 (*Fig. 8.7*). Since the Hercules-medal was

¹³⁵ Unlike his various other medals, Morescalchi's medal for the inauguration of the Foro is explicitly listed among his works in Riccoboni (1942: 555): 'medaglia per l'inaugurazione del Foro Mussolini (1932)'.

¹³⁶ For the Foro Italico, Morescalchi sculpted the Footballer ('Ciocatore di Calcio'), the Archer ('Arciere') as well as the only female figure at the site, the 'Bagnante' or 'Giovinetta', rediscovered in 2007 and previously attributed to Silvio Canevari (Di Castro 2011). Morescalchi produced more 'Fascist' works. Apart from two busts of Mussolini (one for the Salone d'Onore of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence, another for the city of Foggia), he also sculpted the 'Monumento ai Martiri Fascisti' in Udine (1923) as well as the 'Statua del Legionario' and the 'Statua del Giovane Fascista' for the Casa del Fascio at Macerata (no dates). For an overview of his major works, see Riccoboni (1942: 554–5), with Plate 447 (the 'Bagnante') and Plate 457 (the 'Arciere'). On his career until 1934, see Frulli (1998). A very concise biography is in Panzetta (2003: II, 590), with up-to-date bibliography (and see Cinelli 2001 and 1999 and Salvagnini 1999 on his work for the sculptural decoration of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence).



Fig. 8.4 Athenian *kylix* (drinking cup) showing Athena (right) and Hercules wearing the lion skin (left).



Fig. 8.5 Tetradrachm of Alexander the Great wearing the lion skin.



Fig. 8.6 Drawing of the colossal statue of Mussolini planned at the Foro Mussolini (never realized).



Fig. 8.7 Head of the colossal statue of Mussolini.

pecially minted for the occasion of the inauguration and is tied closely to the features and iconography of the architectural complex, it is a plausible hypothesis that it is one of the 'aurei appositamente coniat' which were placed underneath the obelisk.

The inclusion of medals or coins in foundation deposits was not unusual during the *ventennio*. We know that the 'first stones' of the newly founded cities Littoria and Sabaudia contained, apart from a piece of parchment (*pergamena*), a set of coins.¹³⁷ The *prima pietra* of the local Fascist headquarters of Trieste also contained 'coins of the Risen Empire' ('monete del risorto impero').¹³⁸ Such a deposit of coins evokes ancient Roman traditions. A detailed description of a foundation ceremony from Roman antiquity is found in the *Histories* of the Roman historian Tacitus, who depicts the rituals executed at the beginning of the restoration of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. After the placing of the cornerstone, 'gold and silver coins and virgin metals, never smelted in any furnace, were thrown everywhere into the foundations.'¹³⁹ Tacitus' description of coins and pieces of gold and silver being scattered into the foundations offers a reason for the numerous finds of ancient Roman coins deposited under thresholds and walls,¹⁴⁰ a practice which continued throughout the Middle Ages.¹⁴¹ In the Renaissance, discoveries of Roman coins in the foundations of ancient buildings prompted emulation and modification of this custom: rulers and popes deposited specially minted medals (often adorned with their own portraits) in the foundations of their building projects and expressed the expectation that these deposits would once be discovered and preserve their names.¹⁴²

A specific model for the placement of medals underneath an obelisk is afforded by the most famous obelisk of Rome in front of St Peter's basilica. As argued on pp. 59–60, Domenico Fontana's re-erection of this particular obelisk under Pope Sixtus V served as inspiration and model for the Fascist

¹³⁷ On Littoria, see Stabile (1998: 73). On Sabaudia, see Iannella (2011: 324).

¹³⁸ Seri (1982: 111).

¹³⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 4.53: 'passimque iniectae fundamentis argenti aurique stipes et metallorum primitiae, nullis fornacibus victae.' See Heubner (1976: 129 *ad loc.*) on understanding *stipes* as 'coins'.

¹⁴⁰ Donderer (1984).

¹⁴¹ Schraven (2009: 190).

¹⁴² See Schraven (2009) (on Sigismondo Malatesta in Rimini) and Schraven (2012) (on the Ponte Sisto in Rome). On the deliberate revival of ancient deposition practices, see Schraven (2009: 191).

engineers. In Fontana's published account of the different steps of the process, he describes the placement of specially minted medals in the foundations for the obelisk:

In this aforementioned foundation in many places they threw medals of bronze in memory of the achievement, among which were especially two cassettes of travertine in each of which there were twelve medals, which had on one side imprinted the image of Our Lord, and reverse sides of many kinds: some (bore) a man, who sleeps in the country under a tree, with the motto around it which says: PERFECT SAFETY . . . some others bore on one side the image of Pope Pius the Fifth, and on the reverse some bore Religio, some Iustitia. And this has been put here for the satisfaction of those who desire to know everything that happened.¹⁴³

The deposit of specially minted portrait medals underneath the Mussolini obelisk therefore followed both ancient and Renaissance traditions, in keeping with the layered *romanità* of the obelisk itself and its architectural context.

The parchment *Codex* as part of the deposit

The introductions to the different editions of the *Codex* reveal that the original document was written by hand on parchment 'in humanist script' ('caratteri umanistici') and decorated with miniatures by Enrico Brignoli in the workshop of Nestore Leoni. Leoni (1862–1947) was one of the foremost calligraphers and miniaturists of his time.¹⁴⁴ In the nineteenth century, the medieval art of book decoration was revived as part of the Romantic period's larger interest in the Middle Ages,¹⁴⁵ and in Italy, Leoni was the most famous and revered artist of this rediscovered craft. Enrico Brignoli, one of Leoni's favourite students, worked in the master's Roman workshop for more than thirty years. For example, he

¹⁴³ Fontana (1590: fols. 5^v–6^r): '... in detto fondamento in molti luoghi si gettonono medaglie di bronzo in memoria del fatto, fra le quali particolarmente furono due cassette di trevertino dentrovi dodici medaglie per ciascuna, quali havevano da una banda scolpita l'immagine di Nostro Signore, e li roversi di molte sorti; alcune un huomo, che dorme alla campagna sotto a un arboro, con il motto a torno che dice: PERFECTA SECVRITAS: ... alcun' altre havevano da una banda l'effigie di Papa Pio Quinto, e nel roverso altre la Religione, altre la Giustitia. E questo s'è messo qui per sodisfattione di quelli che, desiderano sapere tutto il successo.'

¹⁴⁴ No recent studies of Leoni's life and work exist. The only book-length discussion is Orestano (1935). For contemporary appraisals of his work, see especially also Biagi (1926) and Angeli (1930) (cf. below, pp. 79–80).

¹⁴⁵ Ascoli (2007: 197).

carried out the calligraphy of an edition of Dante's *La Vita Nuova* (1921), for which Vittorio Grassi (1878–1958) produced the watercolour illustrations and Leoni executed the decorations in the margins. Leoni and Brignoli also worked together on the *Commentari della Guerra e della Vittoria*. Completed in the early 1930s and presented to the Italian State, these two lavishly calligraphed and decorated volumes glorify Italy's role in the First World War (Fig. 8.8).¹⁴⁶ In December 1932, Brignoli took over the master's workshop entirely.¹⁴⁷

Unfortunately, no photos of the original *Codex* have come to light. The surviving works of Leoni and Brignoli provide an impression of what the original *Codex* may have looked like. A still closer parallel may be another Fascist deposit text, which Mussolini himself placed in the *prima pietra* of the new Istituto Luce (the regime's cinematographic centre) on 11 November 1937 (Fig. 8.1). This text was also calligraphed and illuminated by Enrico Brignoli. Although the document itself probably remains in the institute's foundation stone, a photograph of it exists, which shows the Latin text, calligraphed in Roman capitals, flanked by bundles of *fasces*, enclosed in a cartouche of oak leafs and acorns, and surmounted by an eagle clutching a bundle of *fasces* (Fig. 8.9). Including such pieces of illuminated parchment in foundation deposits may not have been in itself unusual: the practice is attested in- and outside Italy during this period and it forms part of the revival of parchment illumination more generally.¹⁴⁸ What is unusual about the *Codex* – apart from its content – is its length. The text of the *Codex* is 1,220 words long – more than fifteen times the length of the text in the *prima pietra* of the Istituto Luce. A text of this length would not have been able to fit onto a single sheet of parchment. Since the term *Codex* (Italian 'codice') is the usual term for a manuscript text in book form, the title *Codex Fori Mussolini* suggests that the deposited document consisted of several sheets of parchment, bound together into a book-like form.

¹⁴⁶ Mancini (2012: 274, n. 34), Ascoli (2007: 203–04), Angeli (1930: 212).

¹⁴⁷ The only source for Enrico Brignoli's career is Orestano (1935: 55–6). Francesco Orestano (1873–1945), a philosopher with strong Fascist sympathies, considered Brignoli to be a 'perfect calligrapher' ('calligrafo perfetto'), with a special talent for the most arduous decorative techniques. According to him, Brignoli even surpassed his master when he executed the gothic lettering for the thirteen tables of the Constitution of the United States, completed by Leoni's workshop in 1901.

¹⁴⁸ Coomans (2007) offers an overview of the uses of manuscript illumination in a wide variety of both private and public documents during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the use of illuminated parchment in *lapides primarii* (Coomans 2007: 54–5).



Fig. 8.8 A page from Nestore Leoni's *Commentari della Guerra e della Vittoria*.



Fig. 8.9 The parchment deposited in the foundation stone of the Istituto Luce (Rome), illuminated and calligraphed by Enrico Brignoli.

Hand-written on parchment and decorated with miniatures, the *Codex* evokes an old and eminent tradition of manuscript production. According to Guido Biagi (1855–1925), director of the famous Laurentian Library in Florence, Leoni was the ‘renewer and restorer of an art that had reached the summit of perfection in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.’¹⁴⁹ Indeed, Leoni’s decorative art was specifically said to revive the art of manuscript painters such as the Florentine Boccardino the Elder (1460–1529) and Monte di Giovanni del Fora (c. 1448–c. 1533).¹⁵⁰ Other commentators considered his work worthy of the art of the famous Fra Angelico (1395–c. 1455) and Bartolomeo della Gatta (1448–1502).¹⁵¹ Generally, the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, collectively known in Fascist Italy as the *medioevo*, played an important role in Fascist constructions of national identity, an importance which has sometimes been overlooked in light of the prominence of Roman antiquity as model and inspiration for Italian Fascism.¹⁵² The *medioevo* was a period of Italian cultural dominance (albeit limited to a small number of Italian city states), and its architectural and intellectual achievements were proudly displayed during the *ventennio*. As Lasansky argues:

If the rhetoric of antiquity served to legitimize the regime’s agenda of empire building, the medieval/Renaissance past provided regime leaders with distinct material and a set of myths that allowed them to reinforce the idea of ‘native’ Italic traditions and a shared concept of the Italian self. . . .¹⁵³

Accordingly, calligraphy and manuscript illumination like that of Leoni and his workshop were considered expressions of national, Italian genius.¹⁵⁴ In combination with the choice for ‘caratteri umanistici’ (the usual way of referring to the Latin script of the fifteenth century in particular), the parchment codex of the Foro is also associated with the medieval/Renaissance past as the time

¹⁴⁹ Biagi (1926: 513): ‘rinnovatore e creatore di un’arte che nel Medio Evo e nel Rinascimento aveva toccato il massimo della perfezione’.

¹⁵⁰ Angeli (1930: 196–7).

¹⁵¹ Angeli (1930: 198).

¹⁵² Lasansky (2004: 19–25) observes that historians and cultural leaders of the *ventennio* tended to conflate the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, preferring to apply the term ‘medieval’ (*medievale*) to works of art and literature modern scholars would regard as products of the Renaissance.

¹⁵³ Lasansky (2004: xxxvi).

¹⁵⁴ Ascoli (2007: 204).

of the emergence of humanism, which was regarded as a national 'Italian' movement.¹⁵⁵

The material and visual evocation of the *medioevo* also has a further significance. Almost all texts from classical antiquity were transmitted to us in the form of medieval manuscripts, a fact which testifies to the strength and durability of parchment as a medium. In his essay on Nestore Leoni and his art, published in 1930, the art critic Diego Angeli (1869–1937) praised parchment precisely for this material quality. Unlike frescoes, statues, paintings and even architecture, he argued, illuminated parchment was able to transmit the memory of an era from one generation to the next. 'A codex', he writes, 'presents us with the entire evolution of a whole period; it follows this period not only in its graphic aspect, but it comments upon it, illustrates it, develops it with its text.'¹⁵⁶ Citing Leoni's *Commentari* as the prime example, Angeli emphasized the advantages of *codici*, or parchment manuscripts, for eternalizing and commemorating the main achievements of the Italian nation.¹⁵⁷ The physical appearance of the *Codex Fori Mussolini* thus emphasizes its function as transmitter of text and history from one epoch to the next – from the Fascist present into the distant future.

As a material object, then, the *Codex Fori Mussolini* evokes an eclectic combination of Roman antiquity and later periods of Italian cultural pre-eminence. Linguistically, it is reminiscent of the classical prose style of Cicero and Livy, and its content explicitly links the Fascist present to the ancient Roman past (see above, pp. 23–7 and pp. 60–1). However, the *medioevo*-aesthetic of its physical appearance complicates the picture, offering yet another example of the layered notion of *romanità*. In sections 6 and 7, we argued that the Foro and the obelisk, too, not only alluded to ancient Roman models but were also linked to building- and engineering projects from the Italian Renaissance. This selective combination of ancient Rome and later periods of 'Italian' dominance

¹⁵⁵ Among others, Festa (1935) argues that Renaissance humanism was a specifically national Italian movement.

¹⁵⁶ Angeli (1930: 216): 'Il codice, per conto suo, ci presenta l'intero svolgimento di tutto un periodo, lo segue non solo nella sua visione grafica, ma lo commenta, lo illustra, lo sviluppa col suo testo.'

¹⁵⁷ Angeli (1930: 216–17). Around that same time, this advantage of vellum was also recognized by one Umberto Silvestri, who reportedly projected an illustrated history of the first ten years of Fascism, to be executed on parchment, for the celebration of the *Decennale* in 1932, but the project never materialized due to a lack of funding: Mancini (2012: 274, n. 34).

(especially the later *medioevo* and the *Rinascimento*) is a shared feature of the Foro, the obelisk and the deposit.

The written message as part of the deposit

Neither the use of medals, nor of parchment were unusual in foundation deposits. Not even the use of Latin in the *Codex* is unique. Although many deposit texts were written in Italian, we do know of some written in Latin, such as the text contained in the *prima pietra* of Istituto Luce (Fig. 8.1 above).¹⁵⁸ As a language that had already proven its capacity of transcending the centuries, Latin was regarded as appropriate for a deposit that by definition also aimed at an audience in the remote future (see section 4 above).

While the medium and language of the *Codex* follow established conventions, its specific content distinguishes it from other deposit texts. As far as we know (based on those deposit texts that were not only buried but also published in some way), deposit texts are usually very short, commemorating only the placement of the *prima pietra*, the date of inauguration, the names of the commissioners and the function of the future site. The *Codex*, on the other hand, presents an elaborate historical narrative of the Fascist movement, biographical details of both Mussolini and Ricci and an extremely detailed account of the history and appearance of the obelisk and its surroundings. Its length, content and style all testify to the special importance placed on this particular deposit and the determination of its builders to convey a specific, carefully calculated message.

¹⁵⁸ The Latin text in the foundation stone of Cinecittà is available in Cicchino and Olivo (2006: 156), citing from *La Tribuna* of 29 January 1936). Additionally, the foundation stone of the Church of St Anthony in Mussolini's birthplace Predappio contains a brief Latin text on parchment (deposited in October 1931), which commemorates the tenth anniversary of Fascism and praises Mussolini's religiosity (see Viroli 1999: 165). A deposit placed during the inauguration of an EUR building site (visible in *Giornale Luce* B1188, 27/10/1937 at 00:01:01–04) also contained a Latin text, reprinted in Tian (1940: 303). Reportedly, the document intended to be deposited at the building site of the *casa del Fascio* in Mussolinia (on 12 May 1924) was composed in Latin by Nicolò Vitale (Di Monaco *s.a.*, III, 342; for the ceremony, see also Minutoli 2013: 64).

Latin Text and Translation

Codex Fori Mussolini

Magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo.

Virgilio, Ec. IV, 5.

Bellum maxime omnium memorabile quae unquam gesta essent ab anno MCMXIV ad annum MCMXVIII tota paene Europa exarsit, quod, cum et aliae gentes vel armis vel opibus pugnantes adiuvisent fereque omnes anxie mente fuissent, totius orbis terrae bellum factum atque appellatum est.

- v Huic quidem bello Itali, quamvis paulo ante tot post casus hostibus devictis tyrannisque expulsis denique in populi unius corpus liberi coaluissent seseque vix firmassent, cum populis qui pro rei publicae salute iure ac legitime, sed tum incerto Marte, pugnarent interesse statuerunt atque patriae fines ex aliorum dominatu vindicare. Veterum autem malorum memores et qua sunt
x virtute atque humanitate asperrima quaeque perpassi neque vitae neque impensae pepercerunt ut sibi sociisque victoriam compararent, quam ingenti hostium exercitu profligato egregiam denique sunt adepti.

- Sed hominum qui tum Italorum publicis rebus praeerant, alii ad civium vel exterarum gentium ambitiosas voluntates nimis pavidi, alii opinionum
xv commentis deliri, utpote qui vel omnia civibus tribuerent nihil patriae vel patriam ipsam omnino esse negarent, pessime tam praeclara tantoque sanguine parta victoria usi Italiam in summum discrimen adduxerunt ut optimus quisque civis eius saluti iam desperaret.

The Codex of the Foro Mussolini

'The great order of the ages is born afresh.'

Vergil, *Ecl.* 4.5.

The most memorable war of all that have ever been fought raged in almost the whole of Europe from 1914 to 1918. Since other peoples also helped those who were fighting with weapons or with money, and almost all were afraid, this war became and was called a World War.

Although the Italians had not long before, after so many deaths, with the 5 enemies conquered and the tyrants expelled, finally united in the body of one free people and had barely established themselves, they nevertheless decided to participate in this war on the side of those nations that were fighting justly and legitimately for the safety of their states, though at that time with uncertain success in war, and decided to free the territory of their fatherland from 10 the domination of others. But mindful of old wrongs and of the virtue and humanity with which they had suffered all the most difficult things, they spared neither life nor costs in order to win victory for themselves and their allies, which they finally excellently attained, once the enemies' huge army had been quashed. 15

But of the men who were then the leaders of Italian politics, some were too fearful in the face of ambitious desires of citizens and foreign peoples, others deluded because of their false convictions, inasmuch as they either gave all things to the citizens and nothing to the fatherland or denied that the fatherland itself existed at all. Making very bad use of such a famous 20 victory that had been the result of so much bloodshed, they led Italy into the gravest danger, so that each excellent citizen already despaired of its safety.

Ea tempestate caelesti quodam nutu atque numine VIR exstitit, qui singulari
 xx acie ingeni animoque firmissimo praeditus et ad omnia fortia facienda ac
 patienda paratus, non solum res inclinatās eversasque in pristinum restituere
 sed etiam Italiam illam, quam veteres Romani orbis terrarum lumen effecissent,
 Italis reddere divina mente concepit consiliisque facta adaequare est aggressus.
 Qui Vir fuit

xxv

BENITVS MVSSOLINI.

Hic quidem, cum primum patriae caritate victus bellum civibus acriter
 suasisset, deinde miles strenue in acie pugnasset sanguinemque effudisset,
 victoria parta fasces, qui veterum Romanorum pristinas virtutes adumbrarent,
 instaurandos decrevit atque instauravit.

*

xxx Inter omnes quidem satis constat BENITVM MVSSOLINI, ex quo summam
 rerum suscepit, cum cives omnes suo sagaci subtilique sensu Italae gentis
 virtutum captos secum traheret, effecisse ut ii quam maximas utilitates ex belli
 victoria caperent atque inter ceteras gentes honestissimum locum obtinerent.
 Nec ullum fugit Illum diuturna controversia dirempta rei publicae Summi
 xxxv Romani Pontificis amicitiam iusto foedere conciliasse, patriae exercitum
 ornatissimum cum maritima et aëria classe quam optime instructa comparasse
 legemque tulisse ut qui aliquam artem profiterentur itemque fabricatores ac
 fabri omnes in collegia vel societates coirent, quae tamen cum re publica arte
 cohaerent ne causa esset quare odiis inter sese ac simultatibus conflictarentur
 xl et cum omnium civium detrimento in suis studiis atque operibus cessarent.

At this time by some divine command and will, a MAN appeared. He was gifted with a singular sharpness of mind and a most steadfast spirit and ready 25 to undertake or to undergo anything bravely. In his divine mind, he formed the plan not only to restore the fallen and overthrown fortunes [of Italy] to their former state, but even to restore to the Italians that Italy which the ancient Romans had turned into a light for the entire world, and he set about making his deeds equal to his plans. This man was 30

BENITO MUSSOLINI.

When this man, overcome by love for his fatherland, had first sharply urged the citizens to war and then fought strenuously as a soldier at the front and poured out his blood, he decided, after victory had been won, to restore the fasces, since they represented the original virtues of the ancient Romans, and 35 he restored them.

*

All are indeed agreed that BENITO MUSSOLINI, from the moment that he took over the leadership of affairs, drew all citizens after him, having captured them with his acute and keen sense of the virtues of the Italian people, and achieved it that they received the greatest possible use from the victory in the 40 war, and obtained among the other peoples the most honoured position. And everybody knows that, after the long-lasting controversy had been dissolved, He [Mussolini] acquired for the state the friendship of the highest priest of Rome with a just treaty, that he provided the country with the best-prepared army and a most excellently equipped naval and an air fleet, and that he 45 carried a law that those who practised a profession and likewise artisans and craftsmen should all join in corporations or societies, which were nevertheless closely linked to the state, so that there should be no reason for them to argue amongst each other because of jealousies or rivalries nor to cease in their efforts and works to the detriment of all citizens. 50

Praeterea puerorum et adulescentium disciplinam novis legibus et peropportunis institutis moderatus est, artium studia atque doctrinas omnino provexit; Italiae urbes, in primis Romam, magnificis iisque utilibus aedificiis exornandas, quam plurimas vias muniendas, cum omnium temporum
 xlv tum maxime antiquitatis monumenta reficienda vel effodienda curavit. Agri culturae autem prospexit atque consuluit ita ut loca diu inculta et pestifera brevi feracia ac salubria fierent; colonias armis praescriptisque firmavit; Italogum nummo stabile pretium fecit eosque quantum potuit angustiis, quibus ceterae gentes laborant, levavit.

l Neque vero, cum tot tantaque negotia sustineat, celebrari vel tantum enumerari possunt singula quae gesserit ut res Italas omnino tutaretur, legibus emendaret, moribus ornaret utque cives omnes in officio contineret.

Denique tanti VIRI salubri consilio, summa prudentia, certissima voluntate, peropportuna opera rem publicam nunc demum habemus quae nulla erat a. d.
 lrv V Kal. Nov. a. MCMXXII, cum regnante Victorio Emanuele III Itali sibi Italiam obtinuerunt novusque ab integro saeculorum ordo eis natus est.

*

Qui ut in perpetuum continuaretur pueros, puellas, adulescentes in nova luce atque fere in patriae ipsius sinu educandos esse VIR ille sensit, qui omnia considerat atque providet. Lex igitur a. MCMXXVI (IV) lata acceptaque est
 lx ut Italiae pubes, dummodo parentes consentirent, in sodalicia coiret et aetatis atque sexus ratione habita «Balilla», «Avanguardisti», «Piccole Italiane», «Giovani Italiane» fieret. Instituta igitur est quae «Opera Nazionale Balilla» appellatur, eique *Renatum Ricci* DVX praefecit.

Hic quidem Vir Carariae natus et miles voluntarius bello, quod supra
 lxv memoravimus, interfuerat et in Flumentana legione postea militaverat et in re publica reficienda renovandaque cum primis BENITVM MVSSOLINI sectatus erat.

Tunc vero, cum tanti momenti rei sibi curam suscepisset, effecit ut quam optime perficeretur saluberrimum DVCIS consilium.

Furthermore, he regulated the discipline of boys and young men with new laws and well-suited regulations, and he altogether furthered the study and the teaching of the arts; he took care that the cities of Italy, especially Rome, were decorated with edifices that were magnificent and useful, that as many roads as possible were built, and that monuments of all times and especially of antiquity were restored or excavated. Moreover he provided for agriculture and he took steps so that places that had long been uncultivated and pestilential became within a short time fertile and healthy; the colonies he strengthened with arms and regulations; he stabilized the exchange rate of the currency of the Italians and he freed them, as much as he could, from the poverty under which the other peoples suffer. 55 60

Since he undertakes so many and such large projects, it is indeed not possible to praise or even only enumerate one by one the things which he has carried out in order to completely protect the Italian state, improve it with laws, adorn it with customs and to retain all its citizens in obedience.

Lastly, because of the sound mind, the greatest prudence, the most determined purpose and the most timely effort of so great a MAN, we now at last have a state, which was none until 28 October 1922 when under the reign of Vittorio Emanuele III, the Italians occupied Italy for themselves and a new order of the ages was born for them afresh. 65

*

In order that this order might last forever, this MAN, who thinks of all things and foresees them, felt that boys, girls and young men and women had to be educated in the new light and practically in the lap of the fatherland itself. Therefore, a law was carried and accepted in 1926 (IV) that the youth of Italy, provided that the parents agreed, might come together in bands and, depending on their age and sex, would become 'Balilla', 'Avanguardisti', 'Piccole Italiane' or 'Giovani Italiane'. Thus the so-called 'Opera Nazionale Balilla' was founded, and the LEADER made *Renato Ricci* its prefect. 70 75

This Man was born in Carrara, had volunteered in the war which I mentioned above, later fought in the legion 'Flumentana', and had been one of the first to follow BENITO MUSSOLINI in remaking and renewing the state. 80

At that time, when he had taken upon himself the responsibility for a thing of such great importance, he executed it so that the beneficial decision of the LEADER might be realized in the best possible way.

lxx Quod Itali mirati certatim liberos his Lictoriis sodaliciis quotannis inscribendos curaverunt ut ea iam ex multis milibus puerorum, puellarum, adulescentium constant. Quorum animi tutis praeceptis, optimis libris, musica arte, per opportunis sermonibus, terrestribus atque maritimis peregrinationibus, ceteris rebus a praeceptoribus, sacerdotibus, praefectis ad illam absolutam patriae imaginem informantur, quam DVX ante oculos Italorum cotidie non verbis sed rebus ipsis delineat adumbratque; corpora autem multa atque varia exercitatione, gymniciis ludis, sollemnibus certaminibus firmantur nec solum inter strepitus urbium celebrium, sed etiam, ut fieri potest, in remotissimis pagis et apud exterarum gentes ubicumque Italiae pubes est, eorumque agminum lxxx concentus patriam per DVCEM servatam canentium ad praeclara facinora optimi cuiusque animum excitant invidosque inimicosque Italici nominis docent Italiam futuram esse, non fuisse.

Sed ille alacer DVCIS consili effector, Renatus Ricci, dum haec parat maturatque, Romae aedificandum esse vidit operum corpus, quae cum ad tam lxxxv providum consilium perficiendum essent utilia, tum in primis res a DVCE mire gestas memoriae proderent.

Locus est amoenissimus inter Montem Marium et flumen Tiberim: ibi stadia duo, quorum alterum amplitudine, alterum candore marmorum insigne, aedificata instructaque sunt, praeterea palaestrae, piscinae, hippodromi, xc exedrae, bibliothecae, theatra, nemora, horti, ambulationes, in quibus mentes doctrinarum litterarumque studiis, corpora adsiduis exercitationibus educarentur, animi variis oblectationibus recrearentur solemnique certamina ederentur.

Inde *Forum Mussolini* exstitit: ibique “Lictoria Academia”, in qua instituuntur xcvi illi qui iuventutis sodaliciis praesint quique una cum litterarum doctrinarumque praeceptoribus Italiae pubis animos ad rectum fingant atque conforment illam Mussolini praeclaram sententiam affectantes “Libro e moschetto”.

The Italians, who were amazed by this, zealously made sure to inscribe their children every year for these Fascist fellowships, so that they already consist of 85 many thousand boys, girls and young men and women. With careful teachings, the best books, music, the most suitable speeches, travels on land and on sea and all the rest, their minds are formed by teachers, priests and officers after that perfect image of the fatherland that the LEADER outlines and sketches every day before the eyes of the Italians not in words but by his very deeds; 90 moreover, their bodies are strengthened by abundant and varied exercise, gymnastic games and festive competitions, not only among the bustle of busy cities, but also, as far as possible, in the remotest regions and wherever the youth of Italy lives among foreign peoples; and choirs of these groups, who sing about the fatherland that the LEADER has saved, excite the spirit of each 95 good man to magnificent deeds, and teach those who are jealous and hostile towards Italian glory that Italy is not a thing of the past, but of the future.

But while that man, the eager executor of the will of the LEADER, Renato Ricci, was preparing and advancing these projects, he realized that a complex of buildings had to be constructed at Rome, which would both be useful for 100 the execution of such a prudent plan and, most importantly, commit to posterity the marvelous deeds of the LEADER.

There is a most pleasant space between the Monte Mario and the Tiber. There two stadia were built and prepared for use, one distinguished because of its size, the other because of the splendour of marble statues; furthermore 105 wrestling schools, swimming pools, race tracks, lecture halls, libraries, theatres, groves, gardens, walks, where the minds were to be developed through the pursuit of learning and scholarship, the bodies with unremitting exercises, where the spirits were to be refreshed with different delights, and festive competitions were to be held. 110

From this the *Foro Mussolini* developed: and there is also the 'Fascist Academy', where those are educated who preside over the bands of young people, and who together with the teachers of letters and learning form and skilfully fashion the minds of the Italian youth in the right shape, striving after the famous phrase of Mussolini: 'Libro e moschetto'. 115

Quo vero studio, quibus adsiduis conatibus, qua anxia cura Carariae montes longe lateque temptati atque pervestigati sint ut marmor reperiretur ex quo
c obeliscus monolithus DVCI dicaretur haud facile enarrari potest. Denique candida moles, quae in altitudinem LX, in latitudinem X fere pedes egrederetur, reperta est solisque lumine refulsit. Sed huius inventionis gaudio nova cura successit, cum moles illa ex monte in aequum, Cararia Romam transvehenda esset. Quod quidem nulla antea gens nisi Romani perfecerant; neque qua
cv ratione Romani perfecerint satis constat. Vicit tamen architectorum nostrorum acre ingenium, fabrorum singularis peritia, omnium patriae DVCISQUE ingens amor. Quo factum est ut illa moles ferro lignoque mira arte contexto inclusa fabris molientibus viam primum ex monte in urbem atque ex urbe ad mare inter civium, qui floribus ornaverant, gratulationes precesque veheretur,
cx deinde duobus iunctis novo artificio ratibus, quae inter se onus illud XII fere pondo acciperent atque transveherent, quam difficillimo cursu mari Tyrrheno et per flumen Tiberim Romam ad divi Pauli portum pervenirent.

In divi Pauli portu quinque fere menses stetit navigium illud, cui nomen “Apuanum” inditum erat, dum flumen augeret. Denique a.d. X Kal. Dec. a.
cxv MCMXXX ad Farnesinam adduxerunt atque opportunam tempestatem nacti obeliscum exposuerunt. Qui, a. d. V Kal. Nov. a. X. a fasc. instaur. machinis instrumentisque idoneis basi quadratae impositus, altitudine pedum fere CXXX, cuspede aurea, marmoris candore ceteros omnes vincit.

It is not an easy task to describe the genuine dedication, the unremitting attempts, the solicitous attention with which the mountains of Carrara were tested and searched far and wide, to find marble from which a monolithic obelisk might be dedicated to the LEADER. Finally a shining mass was found, which exceeded in height sixty feet, in width almost ten feet, and glittered in the sunlight. But upon the joy of discovery followed a new task, because this mass had to be transported from the mountains to the plain and from Carrara to Rome. This indeed no people except the Romans had earlier managed, and how they managed it is not sufficiently clear. But nevertheless the strong talent of our architects, the singular skill of our craftsmen, and the huge love of all for the fatherland and for the LEADER prevailed. Thus it was achieved that that mass, encased in iron and wood woven together by miraculous skill, as a result of craftsmen's toil, travelled first the road from the mountain into the city and from the city to the sea amid the rejoicing and good wishes of the citizens who had decorated it with flowers. By means of two pontoons that had been connected to each other by a new system and which between them supported and conveyed that load of almost 400 tons, it then travelled by the most difficult route possible, over the Tyrrhenian sea and via the river Tiber, and arrived in Rome at the harbour of San Paolo.

In the harbour of San Paolo, that raft, which was called 'Apuano', stood for almost five months, until the river swelled. Finally, on 22 November 1930 (VIII), they transported it to Farnesina, and, when excellent weather conditions had arrived, they offloaded the obelisk. On 27 October in the tenth year after the restoration of the Fasces, it was placed on its square base with suitable machines and tools, and with its height of almost 130 feet, with its gold tip, and with the shine of its marble, it surpassed all others.

Stat in ipso aditu *Fori Mussolini* et patriae fata per DVCEM renovata,
 cxx DVCIS in patriam excelsum invictumque animum, civium erga DVCEM
 immotam fidem, res per Fasces praeclare gestas in perpetuum consecrabit.

A. d. V Kal. Nov. – Anno MCMXXXII p. Ch. n.,

OB FASC. INSTAVR. DECENNALIA PRIMA

FELICITER

cxxv

*Hic codex membranaceus latine scriptus ab
 Aurelio Iosepho Amatucci et mira arte
 ab Henrico Brignoli Romae pictus
 in officina Nestoris Leoni positus
 est in basi obelisci monolithi*

cxxx

Fori Mussolini a. d. V

Kal. Nov. – Anno

MCMXXXII

p. Chr. n.

It stands in the very entrance to the *Foro Mussolini* and it will immortalize for eternity the fortunes of the fatherland, restored by the LEADER, the excellent and unconquered spirit of the LEADER regarding the fatherland, the immovable loyalty of the citizens to the LEADER, and the outstanding 145 achievements of Fascism.

On 27 October, 1932 years after the birth of Christ,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST DECENNALE OF THE RESTORED FASCES
HAIL!

This parchment codex was composed in Latin 150
by Aurelio Giuseppe Amatucci, painted with miraculous skill
by Enrico Brignoli at Rome in the workshop of Nestore Leoni, and placed
in the base of the monolithic obelisk of the Foro Mussolini on 27 October 1932.

List of Textual Variants

i	essent <i>SC</i> : sint <i>BF</i>
x	asperrima <i>SC</i> : aspera <i>BF</i>
xvii	optimus <i>SC</i> : bonus <i>BF</i>
xxi	restituere <i>SC</i> : se . . . restituere <i>BF</i>
xxx	suscepit <i>SC</i> : suscepit <i>BF</i>
xxxvii	aliquam artem <i>SC</i> : artem aliquam <i>BF</i>
lxi	atque <i>SC</i> : asque <i>BF</i>
lxx	his Lictoriis <i>SC</i> : Lictoriis <i>BF</i>
lxxix	exteras gentes <i>BSC</i> : extera gentes <i>F</i>
lxxx	animum <i>SC</i> : animam <i>BF</i>
xciv	<i>Forum Mussolini SC</i> : Forum Mussolini <i>B</i> : FORVM MVSSOLINI <i>F</i>
xciv	exstitit <i>SC</i> : extitit <i>BF</i>
xcv	iuventutis <i>SC</i> : adolescentium <i>BF</i>
cx	XII <i>BSC</i> : XII <i>F</i>
cx	Tyrrheno <i>SC</i> : Tirrheno <i>BF</i>
cxii	divi Pauli portum <i>SC</i> : Divi Pauli portum <i>BF</i>
cxiii	divi Pauli portu <i>SC</i> : Divi Pauli portu <i>BF</i>
cxv	MCMXXX <i>SC</i> : MCMXXX (VIII) <i>BF</i>
cxvi	V Kal. Nov. <i>SC</i> : V. Oct. <i>BF</i>
cxix	<i>Fori Mussolini SC</i> : Fori Mussolini <i>B</i> : FORI MVSSOLINI <i>F</i>
cxxiii	OB FASC. INSTAVR. DECENNALIA PRIMA FELICITER <i>SC</i> : XI a fasc. instaur. <i>BF</i>
cxxv	Hic codex . . . p. Chr. n. <i>om. BF</i>

Commentary

CODEX FORI MVSSOLINI] Documents used in foundation deposits usually took the form of single parchment folia (*pergamene*). However, the word *codex* (the Latin word for a ‘book composed of single pages, bound together’) implies that the text under the obelisk was composed of several sheets of parchment combined, which is also likely in view of its length. The word *codex* also evokes a parallel with ancient and medieval manuscripts, which scholars generally refer to as *codices*. The title therefore presents the *Codex Fori Mussolini* as a similarly durable historical document. See also p. 76 and p. 80.

magnus ab . . . nascitur ordo] This line is a citation from the *Eclogues*, the earliest known work of the most famous poet of Roman antiquity, Vergil (Publius Vergilius Maro, 70–19 BC). In *Eclogues* 4.5, this line announces the imminent arrival of a new Golden Age due to the birth of a Divine Child. There was a well-known exegetic tradition, going back to Lactantius and Constantine I in the fourth century, which interpreted *Eclogues* 4 as a prophecy of the birth of Christ (for the sources of this tradition, including Augustine, Jerome and Abelard, see Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008: 487–502). By citing this particular poem, Amatucci imbues Mussolini with a messianic aura which he further develops throughout the *Codex*: see pp. 26–7. Further on in the *Codex* (l. lvi), Amatucci refers back to this line, there transforming the Vergilian *magnus ordo* (great order) into the *novus ordo* (new order) established by the Fascist revolution.

i/1. *bellum maxime . . . gesta essent*] The Latin phrase recalls one of the most famous book-openings of Latin literature: the opening of book of the work *Ab Urbe Condita* (21.1), a history of Rome from its foundation to the Augustan age by the Roman historian Livy (Titus Livius, 59 BC–AD 17). With this

phrase, Livy introduces his famous depiction of the Second Punic war (218–201 BC), fought between Rome and Carthage. Amatucci suggests a parallel between the First World War and the Second Punic War, and parallels the rise of the Roman and the ‘Italian’ empire after gruelling wars. By adopting Livy’s voice, the author of the *Codex* also frames his own role as similar to that of the Roman historian, namely to recount, in Latin, the rise of a new Rome. See also p. 24.

i/1. *essent*] The formulation in Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita* 21.1 is *bellum maxime omnium memorabile quae unquam gesta sint*, which was adopted literally in the *Codex* as printed in *B* and *F*. In *C/S*, Amatucci changed perfect (*gesta sint*) to pluperfect (*gesta essent*) to express the idea that the wars referred to had taken place before the First World War raged (*exarsit*) in Europe. Both versions are grammatically possible (for the perfect in the relative clause as here, see Ernout and Thomas § 399). In Livy’s text, this section is written in indirect speech, which explains the subjunctive. Amatucci could have changed *sint* to indicative *sunt*, but chose to preserve the subjunctive: either in order to stay close to the original, or to turn the relative clause into one of general characteristic, where the subjunctive implies a vagueness as to the precise number of wars to have preceded the First World War (for this type of relative clause, see Kühner and Stegmann § 182.9).

iv/4. *totius orbis terrae bellum*] The first paragraphs about the First World War contain basic facts which a contemporary Italian readership would not require (such as the war’s duration). This supports our hypothesis that the text was composed mainly with a future rather than a contemporary readership in mind.

v/5. *quamvis paulo ante . . . seseque vix firmassent*] This refers to the turbulent period of the Risorgimento (1815–70) preceding the unification of Italy in 1870. ‘Enemies’ (*hostes*) are those who for some reason had opposed the establishment of the Italian Kingdom, and the ‘tyrants’ (*tyranni*) denote either the Habsburg emperors themselves or smaller sovereigns loyal to them, who had controlled parts of northern Italy, including Venice, Lombardy and Tuscany, until insurgents deposed them during the Risorgimento. The Italian occupation of Rome on 20 September 1870 marks the unification of Italy, which, according to Amatucci, initiated a process of national reawakening that climaxes with Fascism.

vi/7. *populi ... liberi*] Or ‘as free men united in the body of one people’, depending on whether we take *liberi* either as a genitive case with *populi* or as a predicative nominative with the main verb of the clause.

vi/6. *in populi ... coaluissent*] The phrase *coalescere in populi unius corpus* – which Amatucci uses to refer to the unification of Italy in 1870 – again derives from Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita*. At Livy 1.8.1 the phrase relates to the origin of the Romans as a legally organized body politic under Romulus: Romulus called the Roman people together and gave them laws since nothing else but law could unite them (*quae coalescere in populi unius corpus nulla re praeterquam legibus poterat*). By adopting the Livian expression, Amatucci suggests a parallel between the unification of Italy and the formation of the Roman people under Romulus.

vii/7. *cum populis qui ... vindicare*] After the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, the Italian government initially stayed neutral and negotiated with both sides, principally in an attempt to secure territorial gains at the end of the war. While the Austrians agreed to grant Trentino to Italy, the Triple Entente (i.e. the French Republic, the British Empire and the Russian Empire) offered, apart from Trentino, South Tirol, Trieste, Gorizia, Istria and northern Dalmatia. The Italians accepted the offer of the Triple Entente in April 1915 (Treaty of London) and joined the war against Austria-Hungary the following month.

vii/8. *cum populis*] The countries at war with the Central Powers during the First World War, primarily the French Republic, the British Empire and the Russian Empire (the Triple Entente). Japan, Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro and Romania were also allied to the Entente. The United States declared war on Germany in 1917, albeit not as a formal ally of France and the British Empire.

vii/9. *pro rei publicae salute*] In ancient Rome, *vota publica* (public ‘vows’ or ‘prayers’) were offered *pro reipublicae salute* (‘for the safety of the state’) on 1 January (the day the new consuls took office), at regular intervals, and in dangerous situations.

vii/9. *incerto Marte*] Mars was the Roman god of war. In classical Latin, ‘with Mars being uncertain’ denotes the undecided outcome of battle (cf. Tac. *Hist.* 4.35 and Livy 1.33.4).

viii/10. *patriae fines . . . dominatu vindicare*] Italy entered the First World War after the Treaty of London (1915) with the ambition of gaining territories inhabited by Italians now under foreign control (see **cum populis qui . . . vindicare*, p. 101). The ambition to reunite all Italians in one national Italian state, which dates back to the Risorgimento (1815–70), is generally known as irredentism, from *Italia irredenta* ('unredeemed Italy'), referring to those territories where indigenous ethnic Italians and Italian-speaking persons formed a majority or substantial minority of the population, but which remained under non-Italian rule.

ix/11. *veterum . . . malorum memores*] Although Amatucci does not specify the 'ancient wrongs' he refers to here, he seems to be alluding to the fact that, even after the unification of Italy in 1870, not all ethnic Italians lived united in one single national state. According to the 'irredentists' (see **patriae fines . . . dominatu vindicare*, p. 102), participation in the First World War would enable them to realize their ambition to gather all Italians in one unified Italy and so to end the state of 'subjugation' of those Italians who still lived under foreign domination.

ix/11. *qua sunt . . . perpassi*] *virtute atque humanitate*, the antecedents of the relative clause introduced by *qua*, have been drawn into the relative clause (instead of *memor virtutis atque humanitatis qua . . .*), a construction common in classical Latin: see Kühner and Stegmann § 195.1.

x/11. *virtute atque humanitate*] This pair is Ciceronian (see, for example, Cic. *QFr.* 1.1.29, *Planc.* 58.1 and *Fam.* 13.26.1.1) and also came to be regarded as typically Roman. The pair frequently appears in humanist texts from Petrarch onwards (see *NLW* s.v. *humanitas* 8).

x/12. *asperrima quaeque*] While the earlier *B* (and hence *F*) reads *aspera quaeque*, Amatucci seems to have changed the phrase to *asperrima quaeque* in the later *C/S*, possibly in order to allude here to the same phrase in Livy 25.6.23. In this passage, the general Marcus Claudius Marcellus speaks on behalf of the Roman veterans of the battle of Cannae (2 August 216 BC), a disastrous defeat of the Roman army by Hannibal's forces. Marcellus demands that the veterans be given the chance to fight once more, prove their bravery and reverse the defeat that they had suffered. The legionaries declare themselves ready to

face 'all the worst in hardship and danger (*asperrima quaeque ad laborem periculumque*) in order that what should have been done at Cannae be done as soon as possible, since every day that we have since lived has been marked for disgrace' (translation: Moore 1940). The Roman legionaries here demand for themselves the kind of hardship that the Italians have already suffered in the past and that now strengthens their resolve to enter the war and avenge the injustices of the past.

xii/14. *hostium exercitu*] The principal enemies meant here are Germany and Austria-Hungary, but also Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. During the Battle of Vittorio Veneto (24 October–3 November, 1918), Italian troops defeated the Austro-Hungarian armies. The battle not only marked the end of the war on the Italian Front, but also precipitated the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Treaty of Saint-Germain (1919) stipulated that Italy gained Trentino, part of Gorizia, Trieste, the South Tirol and Istria. For some nationalists, it was therefore the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, rather than the unification of Italy (1870), which marked the end of the Risorgimento (Arnaldi 2005: 194). The author probably wrote the passage with this battle in mind.

xiii/16. *hominum qui . . . rebus praeerant*] Italian politicians who failed to secure the terms of the Treaty of London (1915) (see **cum populis qui . . . vindicare*, p. 101). Post-war governments did not receive all territorial gains promised during the peace negotiations. The Treaty of Saint Germain (1919) met some Italian claims, and the Kingdom gained, among other areas, Trieste and Istria. However, other claims were denied: the Italians in Fiume (Croatian Rijeka), for example, remained excluded from the Kingdom (except for the short-lived Italian Regency of Carnaro in 1919). This was especially to the dismay of the irredentist party, who wanted to unite all Italians in one Italian state. Additionally, Italian claims on any colonial territories in Africa or Asia as well as any claim on Albania were rejected in the negotiations. The passage reflects the sense of betrayal Italian nationalists experienced after the post-war settlements.

xiv/18. *opinionum commentis*] The wording is reminiscent of Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.5. The reasons for the citation appear to be entirely stylistic (see further pp. 23–4).

xv/19. *omnia civibus tribuerent, nihil patriae*] The fatherland (*patria*) is of central concern to the author of the *Codex* (see also **patriam ipsam . . . esse*

negarent, p. 104 and **absolutam patriae imaginem*, p. 114). In this passage, *omnia civibus* (everything for the citizens) is forcefully contrasted with *nihil patriae* (nothing for the fatherland). This resonates with an idea current among the Fascists: that, unlike their liberal predecessors, who had favoured small groups of citizens to the detriment of the nation as a whole, they themselves put collective welfare above the desires of individual citizens or elitist interest groups. The notion that the Fascist state radically subordinated individual interests of citizens to the general welfare of the nation was also expressed by Mussolini himself (see OO 34: 129–30).

xvi/19. *patriam ipsam . . . esse negarent*] Amatucci probably refers to the perceived incapability of successive Italian governments to capitalize on the outcome of the First World War, to expand the borders of the fatherland to include all ethnic Italians and realize the ideal of *Italia irredenta* (see also **patriae fines . . . dominatu vindicare*, p. 102).

xvii/22. *optimus quisque civis*] This is the reading of C/S. B and F read *bonus quisque civis*. While *bonus quisque* with a substantive is attested in post-classical Latin, *optimus quisque* occurs in Cicero, Livy and Tacitus (but always without a noun). Another unclassical use of a superlative is *locus amoenissimus* below (see further **locus est amoenissimus*, p. 115).

xix/24. *ea tempestate*] Amatucci refers to the *biennio rosso* (1918–20), the aftermath of the First World War, which was characterized by a divided political landscape and a fractured society. Although the Italians had technically been victorious in the Great War in October 1918 in the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, the victory had come at a huge cost. Apart from c. 600,000 dead and c. 950,000 wounded during the war, the country's stability was undermined by internal conflicts as well as grave socio-economic problems such as inflation and unemployment, resulting in spontaneous land occupations, strikes, lootings and eventually a political crisis. This period of crisis is usually seen as the overture to Fascism, since it provided an opportunity for militant patriotic movements, with Mussolini's *fasci di combattimento* (established in Milan in March 1919) rapidly becoming the most important. Apart from 'period of time', *tempestas* also can mean 'storm' (in the metaphorical sense of commotion or calamity), and this is how Aicher (2000: 131) understands the word in this context.

xix/24. *quodam nutu atque numine*] This refers to the widespread idea that Mussolini was a Man of Providence (*Uomo della Provvidenza*), sent to Italy to restore peace and order. Just after the signing of the Lateran Accords in 1929, Pope Pius XI famously called Mussolini 'a man . . . whom Providence had Us encounter' ('un uomo . . . che la Provvidenza Ci ha fatto incontrare'): see Falasca Zamponi (2003: 111). In the *Codex* Mussolini is clearly cast as an earthly messiah-figure: see pp. 26–7. Especially in the context of the ONB, attempts to sacralize Mussolini could take extremely crude forms. For example, a 'creed' of the Balilla opened with the following affirmation: 'I believe in the High Leader, creator of the Blackshirts, and in Jesus Christ, his only protector' ('Io credo nel sommo Duce, creatore delle camicie nere, e in Gesù Cristo, suo unico protettore'). Cf. the opening of the Apostles' Creed: 'I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, his only Son.' In a similar vein, the handbook for the Balilla's avanguardisti (boys aged fourteen to eighteen) stated that 'you, as an Avanguardista, would not exist, were it not that before you, with you, and after you, He and only He exists.' See Ribera and Macola (1928: 631): 'Tu non sei, Avanguardista, se non perché prima di te, con te e dopo di te, Egli e soltanto Egli è'. Cf. Gentile (1996: 138). On Fascism as a political religion, see also p. 26, with n. 66.

xix/24. *VIR*] All editions print this word in capital letters. We do not know how this word was emphasized in the calligraphed parchment version. In any case, the word *MAN* has a special significance in Fascist ideology. A key aim of the Fascist revolution was the creation of a New Man (*Uomo Nuovo*). This ideal human being was a figure of action, violence and virility and had to replace the degenerate citizens of the past in order to secure the new order of Fascism for future generations (Gentile 1996: 137–8, Falasca-Zamponi 1997: 42–56). As such, the idea of the New Man was central to the mission of the Fascist youth organization. Mussolini himself was its perfect embodiment (on the Duce's virility, see Passerini 1991: 99–109), and he exemplified all qualities to which young boys in particular were to aspire. While Amatucci calls Mussolini *VIR*, he refers to Renato Ricci, the president of the ONB, as *Vir* (l. lxiv) Through the partial capitalization Amatucci suggests that Ricci had successfully modelled himself on the dictator's ideal nature, in turn himself functioning as an example for all the children educated by the ONB (on the New Man and the ONB, see

Ponzio 2015). Aicher (2000: 131) prefers to see an echo of the first line of Vergil's *Aeneid* (the famous *arma virumque cano*) in Amatucci's usage of the word *vir*.

xx/25. *ad omnia fortia facienda ac patienda paratus*] This phrase derives from Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* 2.12.9, where the Roman hero Mucius Scaevola declared: 'et facere et pati fortia Romanum est' ('it is the attribute of a Roman to act and to suffer bravely'). It was regularly adduced by the Fascists as a pithy formulation of the 'Roman' virtues of the 'New Man' of Fascism (see further **VIR*, p. 105).

xii/28. *veteres Romani*] Mussolini is said to want to 'return to the Italians (*Italīs*) that Italy (*Italiam*) which the ancient Romans (*veteres Romani*) had made the light of the world'. In classical Latin, *Italia* serves as a geographical designation for Magna Graecia (parts of southern Italy) or for the entire peninsula. Roman citizens called themselves *Romani*, sometimes in explicit contrast to the *Itali* (cf. e.g. Cic. *Har. resp.* 19), and indeed, in Cicero's original formulation (see **orbis terrarum lumen*, p. 106), it is not *Italia* but the city of Rome which the Romans had turned into the 'light of the world'. Amatucci nevertheless presents as self-evident the continuity between the *veteres Romani* and the modern *Itali*, and this continuity forms a cornerstone of Fascist *romanità*. Amatucci himself argued that the Italian nation already emerged in Roman antiquity: in an introduction to Roman history – intended for students – Amatucci claimed that the Italian nation (*nazione italiana*) had emerged from the reforms of the dictator Sulla (c. 138 BC–78 BC). According to him, Sulla wanted to Romanize (*romanizzare*) the Italian peninsula, with one law (*una sola e medesima legge*, i.e. Roman law) and one language (*una sola lingua*, i.e. Latin) for the entire peninsula. In this way, Amatucci explained, regional diversity collapsed, and the Italian nation emerged. Amatucci's vision thus served to justify the Italian nation's claim to being the natural heirs of ancient Rome (and its language). See Amatucci (1910: 173).

xii/29. *orbis terrarum lumen*] This phrase recalls a famous pronouncement from Cicero's fourth Catilinarian (*Cat.* 4.11): *Haec urbs lux orbis terrarum* ('this city [i.e. Rome] is the light of the entire world'). There is a slight difference between the Latin word *lux*, used by Cicero, and Amatucci's choice of *lumen*. Both words mean 'light' and are used in similar ways by ancient authors, but Latin scholarship has sometimes distinguished between *lux*: 'the mass of light which emanates from an effulgent body' and *lumen*: 'light as illuminating

substance' (Ramshorn 1839: 297–8) or the 'cause of light' (Gardin-Dumesnil 1809:427). In Cicero's expression, Rome is a place that is in itself (metaphorically) the brightest of the entire world, while Amatucci's phrase emphasizes the Roman Empire as a *source* of light for the rest of the world. This is not simply an academic distinction: the idea that Rome had 'enlightened' the world and that modern Italy could now once again take on this role is a recurring tenet of Fascist propaganda. On the light metaphors of the *Codex*, see also pp. 26–7.

xxiii/26. *divina mente*] Ancient authors regularly employed the expression *divina mens* to refer to 'divine providence' (e.g. Cic. *Div.* 1.120, *Leg.* 2.11; Vitruv. 6.1.11; Apul. *Mund.* 29). At least once in classical literature, however, the phrase also refers to the mind (*mens*) of an individual human being, as it does in the *Codex*. In the preface to the first book of Vitruvius' work *De Architectura* (1.Pref.1), Vitruvius praises Augustus' god-like mind (*divina mens*). By applying the same expression to Mussolini in the *Codex*, Amatucci may be suggesting a parallel between Mussolini and Augustus as he does elsewhere (see **magnus ab . . . nascitur ordo*, p. 99, see also pp. 23–7).

xxiii/29. *consiliisque facta adaequare*] The glorification of action is a tenet of Fascist ideology that is often found in representations of Mussolini. See further **non verbis sed rebus ipsis*, p. 114.

xxv/31. *BENITVS MVSSOLINI*] *Mussolini* is not Latinized here, while *Benitus* is. There was no uniform practice for the Latinization of Mussolini's name, but *Benitus Mussolini* is the most common Latinization (here and e.g. in Ficari 1938: 30, Capo 1929: 11 and in the inscriptions recorded in Magnini 1995: 206, Pirocchi 1967: 33, with n. 52, and Lansford 2009: 412). In other instances, we also find *Mussolinus*, e.g. in Galante (1928) and the inscription above the entrance of the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice (Lorenzetti 1929: 59).

xxvii/33. *miles strenue . . . sanguinemque effudisset*] During the First World War, Mussolini joined the *bersaglieri* (sharpshooters) and, on 23 February 1917, was seriously wounded by the accidental explosion of a mortar bomb, after which he was released from further military duties. As editor of the Socialist newspaper *Avanti!* Mussolini had initially opposed Italian participation in the war, but he soon changed his mind. He exchanged the editorship of *Avanti!* for that of *Il Popolo d'Italia* and began to write in favour of Italian intervention.

xxviii/35. *fascēs*] In ancient Rome, the *fascēs*, bundles of rods with an axe projecting from the centre, were carried by so-called lictors in front of magistrates to symbolize the power and jurisdiction of their offices (the rods symbolized their right to have citizens flogged, the axe to have them executed). In nineteenth-century Italy, the Italian term *fascio* (meaning 'bundle', 'sheaf') came to be used for political groups of all kinds (among them, from 1919, Mussolini's *fasci di combattimento*, or 'fighting bands', the militant predecessor of his Fascist party). There, the term signified strength through unity, the point being that whilst each independent rod was fragile, as a bundle they were strong. When the *fascēs* were officially adopted as the symbol of the Fascist regime in 1922, they came to combine these different symbolisms of power and justice, unity and strength (see OO 34: 121).

xxix/34. *instauravit*] Through the repetition of the word *instaurare* (*instaurandos decrevit ... instauravit*), the author emphasizes the translation of thought into deed.

xxxiv/42. *nec ullum fugit*] This is a variation of the (rare) expression *neminem fugit*: 'it does not escape anybody', i.e. 'everybody knows' (cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4.39.51, Quint. *Inst.* 11.2.48, Frontin. *Aq.* 122.3).

xxxv/44. *iusto foedere*] Reference to the Lateran Accords (1929) that settled the 'Roman Question', or the sixty-year-old divide that had existed between Church and state. The Pacts ensured that the Vatican became an independent state recognizing the Italian Kingdom; the Church received financial compensation for territories lost in 1873; Roman Catholicism became the official state religion of Italy; and religious instruction was introduced into secondary schools. The Lateran Accords did not end all tensions between Church and state: in 1931, for example, the Pope and Mussolini were again in open disagreement regarding the scope allowed to the Azione Cattolica (a Catholic lay association), which was severely restricted after 1931 (see also **praeceptoribus, sacerdotibus, praeffectis*, p. 113).

xxxviii/47. *collegia vel societates*] Reference to Fascist corporatism: in order to end class conflict and promote social equality, the major sectors of industry, agriculture, the professions and the arts were organized into state-controlled employer associations that negotiated working conditions in a larger assembly

of corporations (the corporatist parliament). Corporatism theoretically aimed at the harmonious cooperation of workers and employers in the service of the entire nation, but actually facilitated the suppression of political dissenters. Italian historians of the *ventennio* sometimes drew a comparison between the Augustan *collegia* and the Fascist economic corporations (see Perry 2001). The alleged parallel between ‘Roman’ and Fascist corporatism is treated in particular detail by Bottai (1939), not mentioned by Perry.

xl/50. *cum omnium civium detrimento . . . cessarent*] This refers to the mass strikes and worker demonstrations that had plagued Italy in the recent past and especially during the *biennio rosso* (1919–20): the regime sought to suppress such forms of civil protest and actively criminalized strikers.

xl/50. *in suis studiis atque operibus cessarent*] This phrase is taken from Cic. *Sen.* 13, apparently for purely stylistic reasons. See further pp. 23–4.

xli/51. *puerorum et adolescentium . . . moderatus est*] As Fascist attempts to directly control education had not produced the desired effect, Mussolini set up the Fascist youth organization Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB) in April 1926. On the ONB see further pp. 43–5. On the role of the ONB in making ‘New Italians’, see also **VIR* (p. 105)

xlili/53. *Italiae urbes, in primis Romam*] Mussolini drastically transformed the urban landscape of many cities in Italy, and Rome was especially important to the urbanistic ambitions of Fascism. On the transformation of Rome, which consisted, *inter alia*, of the construction of large roads to improve the flow of traffic, of new structures (such as the Foro Mussolini), and the excavation and ‘liberation’ of ancient remains, see especially Painter (2005), Baxa (2010) and Kallis (2014). On Italian cities, see Lasansky (2013), who focuses especially on the Fascist reconstruction and presentation of medieval and Renaissance structures.

xlili/53. *magnificis iisque utilibus aedificiis exornandas*] The phrase recalls the emperor Augustus’ transformation of the city of Rome as it was represented in antiquity, namely as a combination of practical and aesthetic measures which left the city both safer and more beautiful (cf. e.g. Suet. *Aug.* 28).

xlvi/56. *agri culturae*] The agricultural policy of Fascism aimed at promoting autarky and at reducing Italy’s reliance on foreign imports, especially of grain.

In 1925, following a poor harvest, Mussolini initiated the Battle for Grain (*battaglia del grano*). Although by the late 1930s wheat production had doubled, and by 1940 Italy had become more or less self-sufficient in cereal production, the Battle of Grain was by no means an unqualified success. Most notably, it negatively affected other domains of agricultural production, such as cattle, sheep farming and fruit production, especially in the South.

xlvi/57. *loca diu inculta . . . salubria fierent*] The renewal of Italian agriculture also involved the reclamation of previously abandoned or unused lands. Most ambitiously, Mussolini in 1929 initiated the large-scale reclamation (*bonifica generale*) of the Pontine Marshes (56 km from Rome) in order to combat malaria and turn the site into fertile arable land. The ten-year project included the drainage of the marshes (*bonifica idraulica*), the construction of five new settlements (*bonifica agraria*) and the extirpation of malaria (*bonifica igienica*). The project resonated in Fascist Latin literature, for example in Alfredo Bartoli's Latin speech in praise of the drainage (Terralbi 1940). Even the ground on which the Foro Mussolini was built first had to be drained and elevated before being built on (see p. 37).

xlvii/58. *colonias . . . firmavit*] The Fascist government spent large sums on developing towns, roads and agricultural colonies for Italian settlers in Africa, even before the large-scale migration programme starting in 1935 and the declaration of Empire in 1936.

xlvi/59. *nummo stabile pretium*] Reference to the Battle for the Lira (*battaglia della lira*) that Mussolini initiated in April 1926 by revaluing the lira in order to be able to continue importing raw materials. Although this intervention enhanced the currency's purchasing power abroad, it also made Italian products more expensive on the international market.

lii/64. *cives omnes in officio contineret*] The Latin phrase *in officio continere* is used by Caesar to describe the keeping in allegiance of individuals or groups through the exertion of authority (*BCiv.* 1.67; *BGall.* 3.11, 5.3, 5.7). It is characteristic of his usage that those who need to be restrained (sometimes even Roman soldiers: *BCiv.* 1.67) are prone to misbehaviour in the absence of such regulating authority. In Caesar's work, the phrase has strong negative connotations, and Amatucci's positive usage of it in this passage is unusual.

lv/67. *a. d. V Kal. Nov. a. MCMXXII*] 28 October 1922, when the King of Italy handed over power to Mussolini after his March on Rome, which had begun on 22 October.

lv/67. *cum regnante Victorio Emanuele III*] Victor Emmanuel III of Italy reigned between 1900 and 1946.

lv/68. *Itali sibi Italiam obtinuerunt*] Amatucci may be referring to the idea that, notwithstanding the unification of Italy in 1870, Italy had not really belonged to the Italian people but rather to opportunistic elites who had exploited the Italian people for their own purposes. The idea that the Fascists had ended this situation by emancipating the Italian people resonated with the populist agenda of the Fascists and helped them to legitimize their 'revolution'.

lv/68. *novus ab integro saeculorum ordo*] The Vergilian *magnus saeculorum ordo* cited at the beginning of the text (see **magnus ab ... nascitur ordo*, p. 99) is here transformed into the *novus saeculorum ordo* of Fascist Italy. See further p. 25.

lix/73. *lex igitur ... acceptataque est*] With a law of 3 April 1926 (No. 2247), the Fascist government established a 'moral corporation' (*ente morale*) in Rome to facilitate both the physical and the moral education of young Italians under the direct supervision of Prime Minister Mussolini. This was the Opera Nazionale Balilla, on which see further pp. 43–5. For the law, see *GURI* (11 January 1927), 86–8 (esp. Art. 1).

lx/74. *dummodo parentes consentirent*] Enrolment in the ONB was technically optional, but in practice automatic in many places: see Schleimer (2004: 290) and Charnitzky (1994: 278).

lxi/75. *Balilla ... Giovani Italiane*] These are the subsections of the ONB according to age and sex: the *Balilla* and the *Piccole Italiane* were the boys and girls between eight and fourteen, the *Avanguardisti* and *Giovani Italiane* were the boys and girls between fourteen and eighteen.

lxiii/77. *Renatum Ricci*] Renato Ricci was appointed as president of the ONB in February 1927. Here and in the volume *Il Foro Mussolini* that was published in 1937 (see p. 8 and pp. 21–2), he was presented as the driving force behind

the construction of the Foro Mussolini. In the preface to *Il Foro Mussolini*, Ricci stated that he coordinated the building process and brought together the sometimes divergent ideas of the different technicians and artists 'at a spiritual and political level' (*su un piano spirituale e politico*): see ONB (1937: 6).

lxiv/78. *Vir*] The author calls Renato Ricci *Vir* ('the Man') with a capital letter 'V', though not full capitalization. By capitalizing *Vir*, Amatucci associates Ricci, too, with the concept of 'the New Man' (see **VIR*, p. 105), suggesting that Ricci belonged to the same category of real men and born leaders as Mussolini himself, whose own special status was marked by full capitalization of *VIR* in ll. xix, liii and lviii (but who is also called *Vir* in l. xxiv).

lxiv/78. *Carariae natus*] Ricci was born in Carrara in northern Tuscany in 1896, began his political career there and retained close ties with the community (Setta 1986: esp. 15–112). His choice of Carraran marble for the obelisk was partly motivated by his involvement with the marble industry there (see further pp. 52–4).

lxiv/78. *miles voluntarius*] After finishing his training as an accountant, Ricci volunteered in July 1915 at the age of nineteen and joined a rifle regiment (the Fifth Regiment of the *Bersaglieri*) at the rank of lieutenant. He served until the end of the First World War and was decorated twice for bravery (Setta 1986: 16–17).

lxiv/78. *bello quod supra memoravimus*] See ll. i–xii and **bellum maxime . . . gesta essent*, p. 99.

lxv/79. *in Flumentana legione*] Ricci participated in the so-called 'Impresa di Fiume'. During the Versailles negotiations, Italy had unsuccessfully argued for the annexation of the Dalmatian port city of Fiume (Croatian Rijeka) to Italian territory (see **hominum qui . . . rebus praeerant*, p. 103). Eventually, the Italian government agreed to evacuate the city, but in September 1919, the poet-soldier Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938) led an army of rebel soldiers to Fiume and occupied the city. When the Italian government resisted this annexation of Fiume, D'Annunzio in 1920 proclaimed the Italian Regency of Carnaro, organized along proto-Fascist lines with himself as *duce*. After the Treaty of Rapallo (November 1920), Fiume formally became

a free state, and in December 1920 the Italian Navy forced the rebel troops to surrender the city.

lxv/79. *Flumentana*] The adjective 'Flumentana' is an Italicism. Latin names for the city of Fiume are 'Vitopolis' and 'Sancti Viti Flumoniensis fanum' (see Grässe 1972: II, 81, s.v. 'Flumen s. Viti').

lxv/80. *re publica reficienda renovandaque*] This phrase evokes the claims of the Roman emperor Augustus to have 'restored the *res publica*' (see Bringmann 2002: 118–23). While radically reconfiguring the realities of Roman politics and laying the constitutional foundations for centuries of monarchic rule, Augustus also restored republican offices and procedures after the prolonged civil war and returned the state to comparative stability. It is significant that Amatucci does not use the more usual Augustan phrases *rem publicam conservare* or *rem publicam restituere*. The choice of *reficere* and *renovare* combines the idea of restoration after a period of chaos with Fascism's revolutionary ambitions and its claims to renewal and to reinvigoration. The concept and vocabulary of *renovatio* is ubiquitous in Fascist Latin literature: see Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016: 224–7).

lxvi/79. *cum primis*] In the spring of 1921, after his return from the Fiume adventure, Ricci quickly joined the National Fascist Party and founded the 'Fascio di Carrara' in his home town, until then a stronghold of socialist and anarchist sympathies: Setta (1986: 15–62).

lxxi/86. *ex multis milibus*] This is no exaggeration. Under Ricci's presidency, enrolment in the various sections of the ONB increased steadily (for these different age groups, see **Balilla . . . Giovani Italiane*, p. 111). In 1928, the ONB included 812,000 *Balilla* and 424,000 *Avanguardisti*. In 1937, the final year of Ricci's presidency, there were 2,478,768 *Balilla*, 2,130,530 *Piccole Italiane*, 960,118 *Avanguardisti* and 483,145 *Giovani Italiane*, a total of more than six million young people (see Setta 1986: 129 and Charnitzky 1994: 278).

lxxiv/88. *praeceptoribus, sacerdotibus, praefectis*] The involvement of teachers, priests and officers in the education of the ONB pupils illustrates the increasing integration of all aspects of education into a Fascist whole. Officers of the Voluntary Militia for National Security ('*Milizia volontaria per la sicurezza*

nazionale'), more commonly known as the Blackshirts ('camicie nere'), also occupied all leadership positions of the *Avanguardisti* and many of the *Balilla*, forging a close connection between the ONB and the militia proper. School teachers (especially those in primary schools) were also strongly encouraged to serve as local ONB organizers and instructors (Schleimer 2004: 111, 127–39, Koon 1985: 86–9). The Catholic Church, too, was integrated into the ONB structures. Although the 1929 agreement between the Kingdom of Italy and the papacy (Lateran Accords) had officially ended a sixty-year period of hostility (see **iusto foedere*, p. 108), the Fascist regime still attempted to limit the sphere of influence of Catholic youth organizations like the youth branch of the *Azione Cattolica*. Instead, Catholic priests were recruited as chaplains of local ONB sections in an attempt to 'annex the church's moral and social authority and presence to serve the state's ends' (Morgan 2004: 119).

lxxiv/89. *absolutam patriae imaginem*] The image of the fatherland (*patria*), represented by Mussolini, is here explicitly presented as the ultimate goal of Fascist youth education. The phrasing is unusual but it recalls the Roman poet Ovid's prayer-like appeal to Emperor Augustus (who is there closely associated with the Roman god Jupiter) at *Tr.* 5.2.49: *o decus, o patriae per te florentis imago* ('Oh glory and likeness of the fatherland which prospers through you').

lxxv/90. *non verbis sed rebus ipsis*] The prevalence of action over 'mere talk' was a principle that was frequently expressed by the Fascists (Nelis 2007: 412). It is closely related to the Fascist ideal of resolute action, prominent in the *Codex*, for which see **VIR* (p. 105) and **consiliisque facta adaequare* (p. 107).

lxxvii/92. *sollemnibus certaminibus*] The word *sollemnis* can mean both 'festive' and 'yearly', and both meanings are presumably in play here. The ONB organized competitions in countless disciplines: for choirs, military bands and academic scholarships. Most important were the countless sporting competitions in diverse disciplines including skiing, horse riding, fencing, rowing and athletics, ranging from local to national level. The *Concorso Dux*, which was held annually since 1929, was the most prominent of the ONB's competitions and took place at the Foro Mussolini as the highpoint of the week-long training exercise of *Avanguardisti* in Rome (the *Campo Dux*). In *Capitolium*, the monthly publication of the city government of Rome, these

annual competitions were linked to the Roman annual games for young men, held in the Campus Martius (Del Debbio and Gelpi 1930: 395, cited on p. 42).

lxxviii/93. *in remotissimis pagis*] The distinction is between *urbes celebres* ('busy cities') and *remotissimi pagi* ('the most remote districts'). Recruitment in the rural areas of southern Italy remained difficult, but in September 1928, the schools of Sicily and Calabria passed into the control of the ONB, allowing the ONB much more direct access to the young people in those areas.

lxxix/93. *apud exteras gentes ubicumque Italiae pubes est*] This phrase seems to refer to Italian communities in areas not at this point under Italian control (see **patriae fines . . . dominatu vindicare*, p. 102).

lxxxvi/101. *memoriae proderent*] This passage again confirms the importance of the 'prospective memory' (cf. p. 1, with n. 1) of Fascism and the role of the Foro Mussolini for the construction of this memory. See also pp. 46–7.

lxxxvii/103. *locus est amoenissimus*] After some deliberation, a low-lying, marshy area outside the Aurelian Walls was chosen as the site of the Foro Mussolini. Other potential locations (see D'Amelio 17, n. 18) were rejected because of their insufficient size or difficult connection to Rome. The chosen area first had to be drained and the ground elevated by five metres (ONB 1937:17) at considerable cost (according to ONB 1937: 6, c. 20 million lire). Cf. also Magi-Spinetti (1934: 94, 96) on the selection of the place and its advantages: he calls the area 'one of the most pleasant and healthy locations in Rome' ('una delle più *amene* e salubri località di Roma . . .', emphasis added) and describes its beauty.

The opening phrase of the description explicitly refers to the ancient literary convention of the *locus amoenus*, the 'pleasant space', a term which refers to a particular type of description of a spot of natural beauty, usually possessed of grass, shade and a brook and offering a pleasant space for rest and reflection (Schönbeck 1962: 15–60).

The phrase *locus est amoenus* occurs at Cic. *Att.* 12.19.1. Amatucci, by combining *locus* with the superlative *amoenissimus* (instead of the positive *amoenus*) creates a phrase which is not attested in classical antiquity, and which both relates the forum to ancient idyllic spaces (and their famous descriptions) and at the same time stresses its superiority, more *amoenus* still

than any ancient precedent. In medieval Latin literature, *locus amoenissimus* is sometimes used to denote paradise (see e.g. Cassiod. *In psal.* 138.237).

lxxxviii/104. *stadia duo*] On the different buildings listed here, the dates of their construction and their current function see *Table 1* on p. 34. Many of them had not yet been constructed in 1932 (although most of them were planned). As of 1932, Amatucci's assertion that all these buildings 'were built and prepared for use' (*aedificata instructaque sunt*) was therefore untrue. Aiming to create an impressive image of the forum complex for an intended future readership, Amatucci anticipates future phases of construction (some destined to remain entirely fictional). The two *stadia* are the large Stadio dei Cipressi and the smaller Stadio dei Marmi. Both were originally designed by Del Debbio. The first, larger stadium (especially noted for its size by Amatucci) was initially constructed as a simple, very large sunken stadium surrounded by cypress trees. Since it was considerably altered in 1950 and again for the 1990 football World Cup, it is now much larger than it was in the 1930s. It also rises to a much greater height, dwarfing the surrounding buildings and the obelisk. The Stadio dei Marmi, on the other hand, remains largely as it was in 1932. It is surrounded by sixty large, marble statues of muscular male athletes engaged in various sporting pursuits (including modern disciplines such as skiing and tennis). Each statue was the gift of an Italian province.

lxxxix/106. *palaestrae*] In Classical antiquity, *παλαίστρα* (Lat. *palaestra*) refers to a Greek-style wrestling school. The Roman architectural writer Vitruvius describes their appearance at *De Architectura* 5.11. In second-century Rome, Greek *palaestrae* were integrated into large bath complexes, and the Foro Mussolini consciously emulates those vast Roman complexes (see pp. 39–42). Of course, the Foro Mussolini does not contain a dedicated wrestling space after the Greek model, and it seems possible that Amatucci here uses the word in analogy to the Italian *palestra*, which refers more generally to a gymnasium. At the Foro Italico, several gyms were part of different buildings, including the Fascist Academy of Physical Education (Accademia Fascista d'Educazione Fisica) (see *Fig. 6.4* on p. 33).

lxxxix/106. *piscinae*] An indoor swimming pool was constructed in 1936–37, in a building which, from the outside, mirrored the Accademia Fascista and

also housed the Accademia di Musica. At the time of the *Codex*' composition, these buildings only existed on paper. Outdoor pools also appear in the plans of the 1930s, but they were only constructed for the 1960 Olympics (see p. 47).

lxxxix/106. *hippodromi*] Here, Amatucci is reporting as fact buildings which do not even appear on any plans: no hippodrome (a racecourse for horses) is projected in the plans of the early 1930s (see *Figs. 6.2 and 6.3*, pp. 31–2). In *Il Foro Mussolini*, however, published in 1937, a future hippodrome (never built) is envisaged 'along the Via Camilluccia' (ONB 1937: 39). A hippodrome did form part of the plans (also never realized) for the grounds of the nearby Villa Madama (see p. 43).

xc/106. *exedrae*] The Latin word *exedra* describes a half-open, semi-circular hall furnished with seats, often used for conversing or philosophical debates. For example, the large imperial bath complexes of ancient Rome contained such *exedrae*, and perhaps the use of the word here further emphasized the parallel between Roman baths and the Foro Mussolini (see further p. 42). Perhaps, Amatucci is referring specifically to the Accademia Fascista's lecture theatres (Caporilli and Simeoni 1990: 77). On the other hand, in Italian the word *esedra* has a broader meaning, signifying simply a semicircular recess or wall, used in indoor or outdoor architecture, and Amatucci may be using the term in this broader sense here.

xc/106. *bibliothecae*] Again, the term may relate particularly to a feature of the Accademia (e.g. the 'sala di lettura e scrittura' mentioned by Caporilli and Simeoni 1990: 26) or describe a planned, yet unrealized feature of the Foro. In any case, the term again suggests a parallel between the Foro and ancient bath complexes (which contained *bibliothecae*).

xc/106. *theatra*] Like the hippodrome, theatres were only a distant dream in 1932. In *Il Foro Mussolini*, an amphitheatre for classical dance, a covered and an open-air theatre are projected (ONB 1937: 39). The large open-air theatre for 15,000 spectators was to be carved into the mountain (ONB 1937: 98–9). None of these three theatres were ever built.

xc/107. *nemora, horti, ambulationes*] Around the built-up area of the Foro Mussolini, a large public park was envisaged, the size of which varied with different stages of planning (see *Figs. 6.2 and 6.3* on pp. 31–2).

xc/107. *mentes ... corpora*] In *Capitolium*, A. Gelpi commented on the way in which the Foro was to help shape the bodies and minds of young people (Del Debbio and Gelpi 1930: 399): ‘The new training grounds at Rome should therefore not be regarded as breeding grounds for athletes, but rather as true and proper schools for future citizens and soldiers of Italy, for whom the motto *mens sana in corpore sano*, transmitted to us from our bravest ancestors, must be a living and concrete reality (‘Le nuove palestre di Roma non vanno quindi considerate come fucine di atleti, ma piuttosto come vere e proprie scuole per i futuri cittadini e soldati d’Italia, per i quali il motto *mens sana in corpore sano*, tramandatoci dai nostri fortissimi padri, dovrà essere una realtà viva e concreta’).

xcii/109. *sollemniaque certamina*] See **sollemnibus certaminibus*, p. 114.

xciv/111. *inde ... exstitit*] The phrase captures the gradual evolution of the complex, which had been conceived by Del Debbio as a zone purely dedicated to physical exercise (see also p. 28). In 1928–29 it was still called ‘Foro dello Sport’, in 1932 ‘Foro Sportivo Mussolini’, and only in 1932 ‘the name changed to the more political appellation “Foro Mussolini”’ (Kallis 2014: 167). The changing names went alongside an extension of the area of the Foro as well as an increasing density of representational and political architecture such as the obelisk (1932), the Fontana della Sfera (1934), or the Forum Imperii (1937). In *Il Foro Mussolini*, the constant renegotiation of the importance and function of the space is given the following spin: ‘The Foro Mussolini – one of the largest building complexes erected by Fascism – emerged and grew gradually, without sudden changes, just like every living organism.’ (‘Il Foro Mussolini, uno dei maggiori complessi edilizi creati dal Fascismo, è nato e cresciuto per gradi, senza sbalzi, come ogni organismo vivo.’) (ONB 1937: 15).

xciv/111. *Lictoria Academia*] This refers to the Fascist Academy of Physical Education (Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica), which Ricci founded in 1928 to train physical education teachers. Its aims were eventually extended to include the training of the future ONB leadership more generally. The school was moved to its building at the Foro Mussolini in 1932 (ONB 1937: 43–5). See also p. 45.

xcv/112. *iuventutis sodaliciis*] Amatucci here altered the text in the later edition (S/C), changing *adulescentium sodaliciis* ('the groups of young people') to *iuventutis sodaliciis* ('the youth groups'). Presumably, the new version more clearly emphasizes the concept of *Giovinezza* ('Youth'), which was idealized in Italian Fascism, and which Ricci also specifically connected with the ONB and the Foro Italico (Ricci 1937: 6). In *Il Foro Mussolini*, the Foro is called 'this beautiful and severe city of the Italian youth' ('questa bella e severa città della giovinezza d'Italia') (ONB 1937: 39). *Giovinezza* was also the title of the de-facto Fascist national anthem.

xcvii/115. *libro e moschetto*] The phrase 'book and rifle' became the most important slogan of Fascist educationalists. The complete phrase runs: 'libro e moschetto (fanno il) fascista perfetto': 'book and rifle (make the) perfect Fascist'. The phrase was coined on the occasion of the inauguration of the Libreria del Littorio in Rome on 2 January 1927 and was (accurately or not) attributed to Mussolini himself (Capurso 2011: 173–4). In 1928, Ricci praised book and rifle as 'the symbolic pair of our new education' in expressing the twin aims of Fascist education: the ability both to reflect and to act decisively (cited in Randazzo 2008: 94).

xcviii/116. *Quo vero studio ...*] The amount of space and detail accorded to the obelisk is striking: It receives 24 of the text's 137 lines. Amatucci invites the reader to interpret the monument as the culmination of all achievements of Fascism, the Italian people and its leader.

xcviii/117. *Carariae montes*] The famous marble quarries of Carrara were already exploited in antiquity, and the marble shipped to its destination from the nearby port of Luna (modern Luni), which gave this white marble its ancient name *marmor Lun(i)ense* (Plin. *HN* 36.14, 36.48). The marble quarries of Carrara are still open today, and they are so important for the history of marble use in Europe that the English word 'quarry' derives from the name 'Carrara'.

civ/123. *Quod quidem ... perfecerant*] There are two possible ways of interpreting the relative connector *quod* ('this'), but in either case, this phrase remains patently untrue. Either, *quod* may specifically refer to the transport of an obelisk from Carrara to Rome. However, the claim that 'no race before the Romans ever managed such a thing' is obviously incorrect, since the ancient

Romans never *did* manage such a thing. Ancient 'Roman' obelisks were *Egyptian* obelisks, made of Egyptian granite and taken from their original sites in Egypt and transported thence to Rome. Even where obelisks were not ancient pharaonic monuments but 'made to order' for a Roman emperor (as in the case of the obelisk of Domitian on the Piazza Navona), they were still cut in Egypt. If, on the other hand, we take *quod* to refer to the cutting and transportation of an obelisk in general, then the statement that no people before the Romans managed this is just as untrue, since the ancient Egyptians cut and transported obelisks long before the Roman people ever existed. This passage shows Amatucci's (and Ricci's) radical 'Romanization' or 'Italicization' of the obelisk's symbolic force. In ancient Rome, the impact of obelisks was precisely due to their provenance from a remote part of the empire, with the transport and re-erection in Rome affirming the city's status as the centre of a world empire. Mussolini's monolith, on the other hand, was carefully divorced from all foreign associations, and its heritage constructed as purely Roman and Italian. See further pp. 52–60.

civ/124. *qua ratione*] On Roman (and Fascist) methods of obelisk transportation see pp. 51–2 and p. 59.

cvii/126. *Quo factum est . . .*] The spectacular journey of the obelisk was captured on photography and film and appeared frequently in Italian newspapers and newsreels (see pp. 55–9).

cvii/127. *moles ferro lignoque mira arte contexto inclusa*] For its transportation, the monolith was encased in a protective covering of wood and steel, adding another sixty-five tons of weight (see Fig. 7.4 on p. 56).

cviii/128. *ex monte in urbem atque ex urbe ad mare*] The marble travelled from its quarry (the Cave della Carbonera) along the Via Carriona, through the town of Carrara, to the Marina di Carrara.

cx/130. *deinde duobus iunctis novo artificio ratibus*] A special type of raft was constructed to transport the obelisk by sea. It consisted of two parallel pontoons between which the obelisk was kept afloat. The raft, called the 'Apuano', was not motorized and was towed along the coast and up the Tiber towards the port of San Paolo. Its measurements exactly allowed it to pass through the arches of the numerous Tiber bridges.

cx/132. *onus illud [XII]*] While *B* and *C/S* show a horizontal line above the numeral and two vertical lines on either side of it, a mistake has been introduced into the text of the later *F*, which shows only the horizontal line. A horizontal line above a Roman numeral indicates a multiplication factor of one thousand. However, the weight of the obelisk could not have been 12,000 Roman pounds (about four tons); it must rather have approached 1,200,000 pounds (400 tons), the weight of the monolith proper being about 300 tons, excluding the weight of the huge corset of steel and wood which was to protect the obelisk. The two additional vertical lines indicate a factor of 100,000 and provide the correct amount.

cxvi/138. *a. d. V Kal. Nov. a. X. a fasc. instaur.*] The date of the completion of the monument is given as 27 October 1932 (in the Fascist calendar, year 10 = 1932). In the subscript, all editions also date the *Codex* itself to 27 October. According to ONB (1937: 87), the erection of the obelisk was completed and the obelisk freed of the concrete structures used for erection on 29 October. The inauguration of the obelisk took place on 4 November 1932 (see *Il Popolo di Roma* 1932a: 5 and Marzolo 1932: 1). Instead of 27 October 1932, *B* and *F* contain an entirely different, incomplete date for the completion of the obelisk: *a. d. V. < . . . > Oct. a. X. a fasc. instaur.* Depending on whether we are to substitute *Kal.*, *Non.* or *Id.* after *V.*, the date could be either 26 September, 3 October or 11 October. The discrepancies between the two versions of the *Codex* can be explained with reference to the genesis of the text: presumably, its initial composition (and possibly its calligraphing?) took place before the date of the definitive completion of construction was known. In the later publication *S/C*, Amatucci was able to substitute the date of the actual deposition and to date the *Codex* to the same day.

cxvii/140. *altitudine pedum fere CXXX*] 130 Roman feet are equivalent to 38.5 metres. The obelisk and base together measured 36.59 metres, the monolith proper 17.40 metres.

cxviii/140. *cuspile aurea*] In fact, the tip was not made of gold but of gilded bronze: see D'Amelio (2005: 79 and n. 55). The tip also functions as a lightning rod.

cxviii/141. *ceteros omnes vincit*] Amatucci claims that the obelisk 'surpasses all other in height' with its golden tip and the shine of its white marble. The last

claim is correct, in so far as no other obelisk in Rome is made of white marble (see pp. 53–4). The gilded tip is an additional unique feature of this monument, although other obelisks, too, are topped with decorative bronze features such as crosses. In terms of height, Amatucci's claim is more dubious. In Rome alone, the combined height of obelisk and base (36.59 m) is surpassed by both the Lateran (45.70 m) and Vatican (41 m) obelisks, while the height of the monolith alone (17.40 m) is also surpassed by the obelisks on Piazza del Popolo and Piazza Montecitorio.

cxxi/142. *in perpetuum consecrabit*] The obelisk was specifically designed to carry the memory of Fascism and of the name of Mussolini into the future, but, paradoxically, the very fact of the *Codex*' ever being read (in its original version on the buried parchment) requires the obelisk's removal, relocation or collapse. See further pp. 46–7 and p. 61.

cxxii/147. *A. d. V Kal. Nov. . . . feliciter*] On the date, see **a. d. V Kal. Nov. a. X a fasc. instaur.* (p. 121).

cxxv/150. *Hic codex . . . MCMXXXII p. Chr. n.*] The subscript is discussed on pp. 63–6. For Aurelio Giuseppe Amatucci, see pp. 10–15. For Enrico Brignoli and the Roman workshop of Nestore Leoni, see pp. 75–6.

Timeline of the *ventennio fascista*

Events concerning the Foro Mussolini, the *Codex* and the obelisk are italicized.

1915	23 May	Italy enters the First World War on the side of Britain and France.
1918	Oct.–Nov.	Battle of Vittorio Veneto.
1919	11 December	Mussolini forms his ‘combat groups’ (<i>fasci di combattimento</i>) in Milan.
1921	9 November	Mussolini forms the National Fascist Party.
1922	22–28 October	March on Rome.
	31 October	Mussolini twenty-seventh Prime Minister of Italy.
	16 November	Mussolini acquires emergency powers.
1923	23 March	The Voluntary Militia for National Security (‘Blackshirts’) is established.
1924	6 April	Fascists win 65 percent of the vote in general elections.
1925	3 January	Mussolini assumes dictatorial powers (press censorship introduced).
1925	October	Launch of the Battle for Grain.
1926	3 April	<i>Formal establishment of the Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB).</i>
		<i>Renato Ricci president of the ONB.</i>
	November	All political parties banned.
1927		<i>First plans of Enrico Del Debbio for the High Institute for Physical Education.</i>
	December	Revaluation of the Lira.
1928		<i>First plans of Enrico Del Debbio for the Foro dello Sport (later Foro Mussolini)</i>
1928	July	<i>Marble block for the obelisk discovered in the quarries of Carrara.</i>

1929	11 February	Lateran Accords between the Kingdom of Italy and the Vatican.
	27 June	<i>The monolith for the Foro Mussolini arrives in Rome.</i>
	23 November	<i>The monolith arrives at Farnesina, close to the site of the Foro Mussolini.</i>
1931		<i>Costantino Costantini put in charge of the obelisk project.</i>
1932	July	<i>The transport of the monolith from Farnesina to the site of the Foro Mussolini begins.</i>
	21 August	<i>The raising of the obelisk begins.</i>
	18 September	<i>The obelisk is placed on the pedestal.</i>
	27 October	<i>The Codex Fori Mussolini is deposited (?).</i>
	4 November	<i>Inauguration of the obelisk, the Academy of Physical Education and the Stadio dei Marmi.</i>
1935	3 October	Italy invades Ethiopia.
1936	11 May	Proclamation of Empire (with Vittorio Emanuele III as Emperor).
1937	23 September	Opening of the Mostra Augustea della Romanità.
1940	10 June	Italy enters the Second World War on the side of Germany.
1941	June	<i>Vito Pandolfi and Paolo Faraggiana attempt to demolish the obelisk using explosives.</i>
1943	25 July	Mussolini deposed.
	23 September	Establishment of the Salò Republic under Mussolini.
1945	28 April	Mussolini executed near Lake Como by Italian partisans.

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